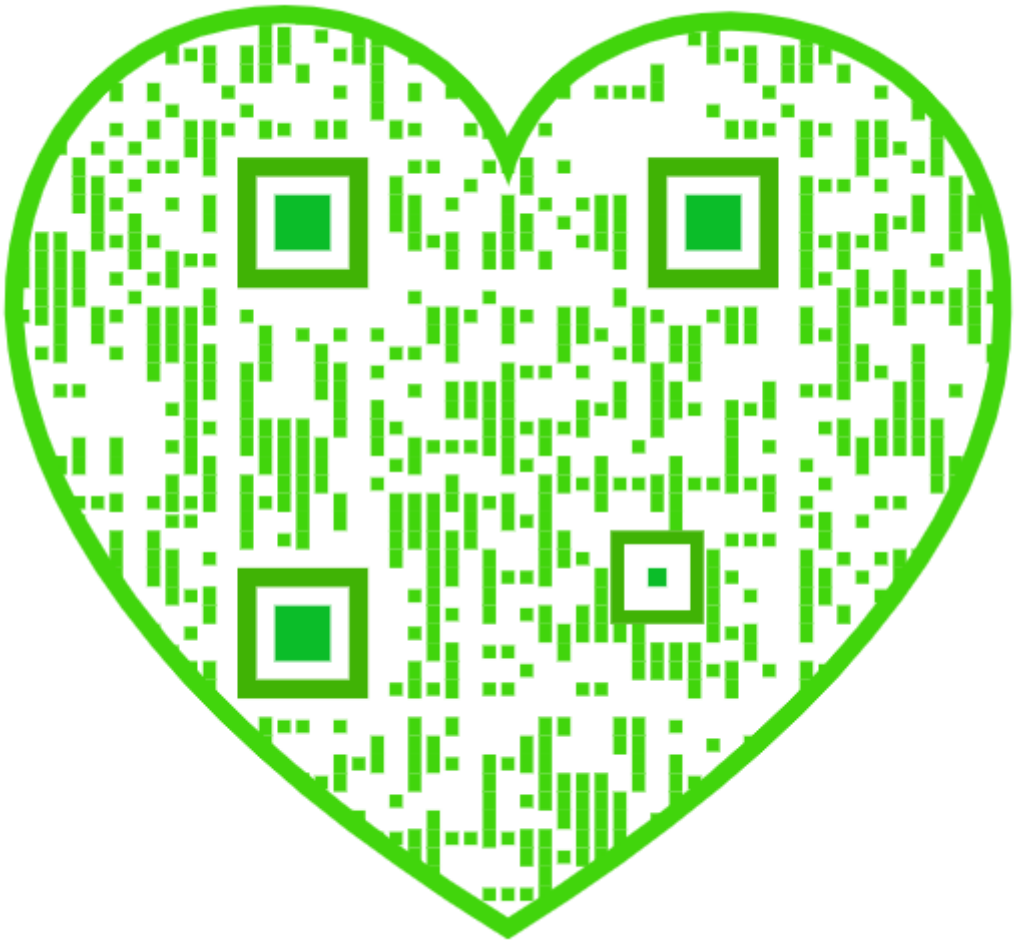

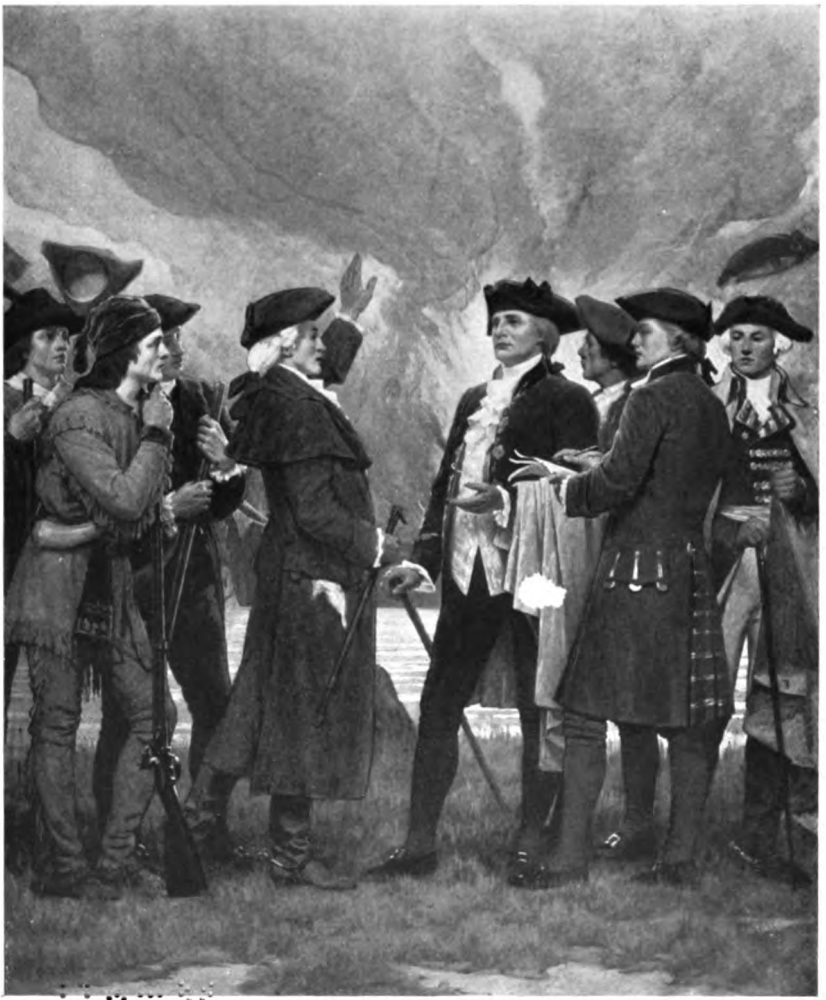

BURNING OF THE PEGGY STEWART; C. Y. TURNER.

# The Appreciation of Pictures

*A HANDBOOK*

By
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NEW YORK: THE BAKER & TAYLOR CO.
33-37 EAST SEVENTEENTH ST., UNION SQ., NORTH

ND
1145
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*Published, September, 1905.*

*The Greenwich Press,*
*New York, U. S. A.*

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# The Appreciation of Pictures

# The Appreciation of Pictures

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this series of handbooks is to show the great arts of design from one and the same standpoint. That standpoint is, of course, the one taken by the enthusiastic and devoted lover of graphic and plastic art. And it may be noted at the outset of our inquiry that this is not the same standpoint as that of the lover of nature, of the lover of poetical thought and expression, of the moralist, or of the person of religious enthusiasm. It is one main purpose of these books to show how independent is the artistical standard of judgment.

When it is said, as it has been said of this and that painter and his works, "He makes me forget that I am looking at a picture and I find myself inquiring what kind of life I

have been living lately," the never wearied, the devoted lover of art can only say that the maker of that remark is woefully at sea. Except on the rarest occasion and by means of the most unusual and unexpected connections between thought and thought, it is impossible that such an impression could be derived by a true art lover from a work of art. A boy whistling in the street; Mr. Folair's providing of a clock to strike ten to bring about the *crux* of the drama "because you have heard a clock strike ten in your infancy"; Browning's Pippa and her songs which sway the actions of all the protagonists in her drama of life—are instances of the possibility that a scrap of art of the most popular, of the most simple and unconscious sort may produce powerful effects upon the moral and mental nature and may sway the action of those who see and hear. That, however, is not the rule, nor is it desirable that it should be the rule. Works of art are not produced with any such purpose in the artist's mind; and if perchance they are,

those works of art are invariably inferior, and in nine cases out of ten they are the works of men who had better not be living and working as artists.

These truths, which to most lovers of art are self-evident, are much more easily demonstrated in the matter of sculpture and in the matter of architecture than they can be in the making of pictures. The art of the picture-maker is very much more elaborate than is either of those two arts. Sculpture is the simplest of the greater arts, with only one principal object in view—that of producing lovely form. Architecture, although a mixture of decorative art with careful and semi-scientific planning and building, is still simple in its artistic sense, for architecture also considers form almost exclusively, and allows of the possibility of colour only in connection with certain definitely classed styles which are studied in connection with their colour treatment, while other styles are studied as having no such aspect. The investment of the surfaces with delicate light and shade

and stronger contrast of shadow is a part of that study of form—it is in this way that form is expressed. It is easy to reduce all your most refined thoughts about sculpture and about architecture to considerations of form alone, and they are none the less noble for that. But in the matter of picture-making there is the transference of actual form and of the appearance of form, to a flat surface; and with this there are combined an immeasurable number of conventions most interesting and most worthy of the artist's study. Then there are the values, the relative strength in light and dark of every part of the picture, and the extreme importance, felt by every modern artist, of giving them their full place in the design and even to classify and group each design in proportion to the beauty and consistency of the scheme of values. Then there is the representation of nature or of incident, and this, although sculpture has it also to reckon with, is of special importance in the making of the picture, and too often sways it to the ruin of the work.

In sculpture you cannot go very far towards nature; you cannot go very far even with your group of figures of small size; there is not much narrative to be got into that, and even the truthful representation of nature is found immediately to be of less importance than the artistic treatment of the scheme; but in the picture, representation, description and even narrative are apt to control. And how this representation, how this description is to be managed—what are the conventional requirements of the picture which deals with portraiture, or the telling of a story, or the record of some landscape effect; that is a question so absorbing and so exciting that the artist deserves but little sympathy who finds himself harassed by the difficulty of being exact. And then there is the suggestion of a hidden meaning, the chance which indeed exists to express a religious or a domestic sentiment—to show love and joy or overwhelming grief. There are pitfalls enough here, and few are the painters who have known how to express those

non-artistic thoughts which they have in common with all refined and delicate minds, without at the same time ruining their pictured art. Then there is the matter of colour, and therewith a most curious problem, a most interesting truth: in nine-tenths of the paintings in this world, colour has been the last thing thought of by the artist, although it would really seem as if that was what he would think of first of all. A picture produced by lithography or by charcoal drawing may have the interest involved in the rendering of form on a flat surface, and the interest involved in the arrangement of darks and lights, and the interest involved in the study of certain facts of external nature, and may be full of expression and record, and of power and knowledge; but it cannot have the charm of colour. For nine-tenths of the historical pictures in the world, a drawing, or a wood-cut six inches long conveys the thought as well as the costly canvas placed in its frame on the wall of the Hôtel-de-Ville. But as soon as

you begin to ask for colour, then the costly canvas is required absolutely, with no substitute for it possible, except on the one hand the stretch of mural painting on plaster (if only we might come back to it!) and on the other the water-colour drawing, which indeed, is often a worthy substitute.

A picture may indeed exist for non-artistic purposes, and even a wholly non-artistic effect may be got from a very artistic picture. It is especially in book-illustration that descriptive pictures are useful, and therefore in place. A boy who is led towards studying the aspect of things, looks at the pictures in his history book or a magazine to see how a ship-of-war was built and rigged in 1812, and if he is interested in drawing things for himself, he will care even more for the modelling of the hull and the way in which the rounding of the bows to the cut-water is shown, and still more the run aft where the ship grows lean at the water's edge to let the rudder do its work—more for that study in pure form

than for the exact number or cut of the sails. The picture from which he is studying these facts (for he takes them for verifiable facts) may be as rough and slight as those in the boys' books of fifty years ago, or as learned as the drawings made for reproduction in the prosperous illustrated magazine of 1900. That is nearly indifferent: neither better nor worse results for the youthful student will come of the high-class artistic composition. So when Ruskin imagines a young girl going up to a Fra Angelico picture full of saints and angels that she may see what heaven is like, the innocent ignorance of a "primitive" is even more likely to have its way with the religious enthusiast than the later work of any school, any epoch, any man of power. Fra Angelico gives us his picture of heaven as a scene perfectly well grasped and set down in minute detail. It consists of an enclosed flowery field in which Dominican monks are dancing with young and smiling angels of feminine aspect. That is not said to throw ridicule

on Fra Angelico, it is a faithful description of the left hand half of the painting, The Last Judgment, in the Academy at Florence. In fact the mysteries and the accepted representation of them in Christian art have never been rightly treated except in the style of the "primitive," and when the mighty living artist, Sargent, in painting upon walls in the Boston Public Library, passed from the suggestion of ancient beliefs to the Christian mystery, he resorted naturally to the rigid and formal design of his predecessors six hundred years ago. He made a magnificent picture of it, and no one will ever regret his having yielded like a man to the necessity of the case; but he yielded, none the less; nor would he have been happy in his task if constrained to paint another than a technically Christian picture in the style of the mosaicists. And Fra Angelico himself, feeble as may be his drawing or his conception of a scene, is great, is original as a decorative designer. He is the natural outcome of centuries of careful

manipulation in goldsmith's work and minute painting, delicate embroidery and coloured glass: and, using this gained knowledge gathered up in him as a fitting receptacle for it, he is led by other than artistic reasons to devote this to the service of his beloved Catholic church. Now, the rarity of similar complete devotion, in modern times, of art to the service of religion, comes of several different and not at all kindred influences. And the fading of the purely devotional impulse is equally recognizable in the work of the consummate masters of the Renaissance and of the sixteenth century.

It has been a comment offered by one or two critics of the *Appreciation of Sculpture* (a former handbook of this series) that the different schools and tendencies of sculpture which were spoken of with respect in that book could not really be approved by one and the same student of art. Whether insincerity or merely what is called inconsistency was in the critic's mind is not now the question.

The question is this: whether there is really any difficulty in so training the powers of observation and so enlarging the sympathies that very different and even seemingly contrary tendencies may be enjoyed by a student of art. To lifelong observers of the art treasures of the world this is not a question hard to answer, for it is the experience of every one that the narrowness of his early convictions, his devotion to a school, his rather exclusive belief in certain influences and tendencies, all disappear as experience grows, as knowledge increases, as the amount of material for comparison is multiplied exceedingly in his own mind. Memory checks hasty conclusions; the truth that the young man has supposed the exclusive property of one set of men, is suddenly found to be in the possession of a score of schools, past and present, Eastern and Western, European and Oriental. The followers of Ingres and Delacroix could fight furiously during the years from 1820 to 1830, and twenty years later the English Pre-

Raphaelites could be defended as strenuously as they were assailed; and all this with a profound conviction on the part of the combatants on each side that they were fighting for the truth. Each one of them was as sure that his cause was right as are the patriots who cut each other's throats in national quarrels; and, as they afterwards found out, with as good a chance of both being wrong. This, however, was youthful enthusiasm and youthful narrowness; we all go through a season of it, but it is blinding and stupefying while it lasts.

The remedy for this condition has been found always to be more knowledge, more experience, more practice in comparing one work of art with another, a larger understanding of what the artists were about—of what they were trying to do. For this purpose our recently gained knowledge of the higher arts of the extreme East has been of immense value to us all. When the mind of Europe awoke to the fact that there had been a great school of painting in China earlier than and also contempora-

neous with the earliest independent painting of modern Europe; and when it was noted that the more recent art of Japan possessed these two remarkably divergent characteristics, consummate power of swiftly recording impressions, including even the setting down from memory of things noted in instantaneous flashes of sight, and the seemingly opposite art of very minute delineation combined with the highest possible degree of finish, finish carried even beyond that of European handiwork in fine art,—then indeed a new sense of what drawing was capable of, of what painting might be, was brought within the reach of the European observer. It does not follow from this that the painting or the black and white draughtsmanship of Europe is to change in a generation, but it does follow that while a new dexterity is brought within the reach of the European executant, so a new flexibility of critical judgment is made possible to the European student.

All of which, put into brief and practical terms, amounts nearly to this—that the

same student of art ought to be able to enjoy to the full the unskillful drawing with the large and gentle humor of Dicky Doyle, and the sombre gravity of Velasquez; or, if that possibly strikes the reader as being a matter of course, then let the divergent but more clearly akin schools be considered. Can the same student of art love Paul Veronese and the paintings of the brothers Van Eyck? Even as I think of this comparison there arises the memory of papers printed during the last six months by the same practiced and most competent critic, dwelling with enthusiastic devotion upon the splendours of, in the one case, the masterly sixteenth century painter in oils; and in the other case on those very Flemings, those minute, patient elaborators of detail, whose great works are in the church of Saint Bavon at Ghent.

There is, indeed, no reason for disliking any graphic art except the vulgar, the ignoble, the mean, the mechanical, the insolent. There is room for admiring and praising all works of art which would seem

to have been honestly meant, simply conceived, patiently wrought; or, if the work is instantaneous and patience has no place in it, then wrought with the whole heart and absorbed attention. And here is the place to say that to admire and to praise is not to accept as exclusively good. How often is it said to one who has spoken or written in qualified praise of a work—said to him by even his friends and sympathizers: "Why, I did not know that you liked that!" or, "Why, I am really surprised that you approved of so and so!" This comes, indeed, of slack attention: but it also comes of an imperfect realization of what critical appreciation is. The reader of a newspaper notice, as of a new building, a new statue, a new mural painting, skims the printed lines very quickly, and, feeling a certain shock of surprise at a laudatory phrase, rushes to the conclusion that the article is all laudation or at least consists of hearty praise. The reverse may be true: the article may be very deprecatory indeed. But there is something to

praise in most works of cost and dignity set up in public places for our inspection—most artists employed on a great task have something to say and some power of saying it. The reader of a notice should really read it through: and if he will not we have merely one more instance of that burden under which we all stagger, executants and critics alike—the burden of haste and worry and unmatured thought which is the heaviness of our mutual misunderstanding. So that the chief object of this book may even be taken as the Reconcilement of the producer and the student, and this for the student's sake chiefly, but truly for the artist's sake as well. For indeed he will work with fresh energy when he finds himself understood by a larger number of persons: better liked by some than by others; much more able to influence some than others of his audience; but still with a large audience, each man of whom is gifted with a certain power of understanding his, the artist's, aim, and the degree of his success in achieving it.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EPOCH OF PRIMITIVE CHARM

THE art of picture-making must be approached in a different way from that which was followed in the book on sculpture, because there is no general standard accepted by all men. It was easy to declare, in connection with sculpture of human subject, that the Greek art of the fifth century B. C. had created and still maintained the standard; and it was easy to show that later Greek work, and in like manner modern work influenced by Greek example, had also a certain universal acceptance as a secondary standard—a standard for a certain purpose. But neither the first nor the second possibility exists in the case of painting nor of black and white draughtsmanship nor of the modification of draughtsmanship which is found in an engraving, lithograph or the like, when applied to narrative and record; to human subject and

the observation of nature. The largeness of appreciation demanded in the first chapter of this treatise is, in the case of sculpture, compatible with an acceptance without hesitation of a single greatest and several minor standards of excellence; but in picture-making that is not true, because the complicated nature of the art, already alluded to, has prevented it. There are so very many sides to the art of painting itself; so many divergent, even contradictory methods, that there has been room always for differences of opinion more radical than those which exist in the case of sculpture. Accepting to the full and reiterating with emphasis all that was said in Chapter I concerning the necessity to the true critic of a ready sympathy with many forms of the art, it is still true that the differences among artists and art students as to what is most expedient, most logical, most seemly in that art are very great. And when these differences of opinion are reflected in the mind of the intelligent but not specially trained observer, the differ-

ences become, one might almost say, hopelessly great. Never will those differences of opinion be reconciled, never, one thinks, will it be admitted that the Venetian oil painting of Giorgione or the Florentine tempera painting of Masaccio, or the Roman fresco painting of Raphael will be taken as a wholly satisfying model of execution. It is only a few weeks since an artist, a highly trained and many-sided Frenchman employed in decorative design of great importance, a man past middle age, with thirty years of observation and thought behind him, made his first visit to Rome, and said to me soon after his return from that capital city of fresco painting, that there was only one perfect style of painting known to him, namely, that of the Raphael frescoes in the Vatican. Yes! he said that to me in private with, I think, grave significance—he really meant to be understood that his conviction was final and that there was no other painting to be compared, for significance and for execution taken together, with the Disputà and the School of

Athens. And then one who reads or who hears such a remark says to himself: "But how about the most painter-like part of painting; how about charm of colour—is not even a scrap of the careless draughtsman, Correggio, worth acres of Raphael's consummate work? And as for the Venetians, is there not more in a bit of Giovanni Bellini than in many frescoes of the Roman school?" This is from the standpoint of the colourist alone, and there are those to whom the art of the colourist seems, as Dr. Holmes said long ago, "The flesh and blood side of art," to be little esteemed in comparison with the transcendental profundity of a few Florentines and Romans: but there are those again to whom transcendental profundity is about the last thing they would ask for in painting. And the curious part of it is that the more painter-like a student grows to be, the more he will respect the so-called flesh and blood side of art, and the higher will be the relative value which he gives, because of their pictorial quality, to paintings without visible

piety, without metaphysical profundity that it is easy to detect, without historical or legendary value.

The paintings of Greco-Roman antiquity are not known to us, and paintings of the Orient are too remote to be included in this brief treatise. We shall have as much as we can do to disentangle the *pros* and *cons*, and to apportion the praise and the deprecation to the painters of Europe for the past five centuries. And so to begin with certain well known paintings in fresco which adorn the walls of a chapel in Padua, Plate I[1] represents The Raising of Lazarus. This picture is on the left hand wall as you enter, the third panel from the choir-arch and in the middle row; it is a little above the eye of the spectator. The figures are about forty-eight inches high as they stand erect. To fully understand the significance in the history of art of such a

[1] The Raising of Lazarus (S. John 11 : 17–44): Fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua, by Giotto di Bondone (1276-1336) and his assistants, about 1305-10. The chapel is a small plain oblong, about thirty feet wide; and the pictures cover the walls, without architectural setting, and with very simple painted borders.

picture, we must recall the extreme conventionality of the earlier pictures which were brought from the Eastern Empire into Italy, or which were produced by Italian artists studying those Byzantine originals. The paintings of the Arena Chapel are, as to their general design, ascribed, without exception, to the famous Giotto, whose full name was probably Ambrogio (giving Ambrogiotto in its augmentative form) di Bondone. The artist had reached his full maturity of power when this fresco was painted, and it is interesting to see the attempt at realistic treatment evident in some parts of it. The body is standing erect, and as the grave clothes remain in their place, leaving uncovered only the face which is that of a corpse, so the figure is still that of a corpse waiting for the further vivifying word. A disciple, an elderly man marked out for an important position by the chased gold halo about his head, seems to have removed certain wrappings; and turns, waiting for the word of Jesus. The veiled figures on the right are not explained by

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Plate I.—THE RAISING OF LAZARUS; GIOTTO.

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Plate II.—THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST; GIOTTO.

any commentator in a satisfactory way. It may be supposed that Martha and Mary are kneeling at the feet of Christ, and if so, then these figures, wearing veils like those of the women of the Moslem East, may possibly be (as suggested) the Synagogue and another pre-Christian faith, the first named being distinguished by a halo like those of Jesus, Lazarus and the disciple next to Lazarus. Our chief purpose is, however, to note the early attempt to give bodily action and its comparative success. That same disciple turns his head with almost perfectly natural gesture; the young man in the middle of the picture starts forward slightly, with one hand at his chin and the other making a backward gesture towards Christ, in a wholly comprehensible attitude; this movement being the obvious one and well understood by the artist though ill-rendered through imperfect science in drawing; the Saviour alone makes a gesture which can be called wholly conventional, and this because it was almost essential for the fourteenth century artist to give to the right hand the ac-

cepted movement of benediction. The rocky hill on the right is introduced merely to explain the location of the tomb itself, which is stated as being a cave against which there lay a stone. That stone, shown as a large flat slab, is handled by two figures in the foreground, and the opening which it closed can be seen behind the standing form of Lazarus.

Plate II[1] gives another picture of the same series, "The Ascension." This is also on the left hand side and in the lower row, being the last picture but one of the series. Now, it is a commonplace, in speaking of Giotto's work as an artist, that he established the types of these oft-repeated biblical representations—that for three hundred years thereafter no man painted a scene of the biblical life of Christ or the legendary life of Mary without reference, even though unconscious, to what Giotto had done before him. To look critically at the awkward stooping figures and kneeling figures in Plate I is to mistake the quality of that

[1] The Ascension of Christ: by Giotto: see previous note.

work which was to be so influential. The freedom of drawing in the more prominent figures is, after all, the important thing, for that is what was new—stiffness and lack of anatomical knowledge had been the rule. But in Plate II other qualities are seen which give us, in a way, the real Giotto, the great and influential painter. The figure of Christ rises from the earth with gesture of arms and movement of head indicating thoughts fixed upon the reunion with his Father. The figure is draped with extreme dignity and beauty; the folds of rather thin stuff drawn rather closely around the person above the waist are marked as they would come in reality, but purified, as it were, made more simple and more severe; the sleeves only retain their almost inevitable awkwardness of line. The head is simply and nobly conceived; and if we note that this head is in profile, and that the figure turns so as to be nearly in profile, we note also that this is because of the painter's desire to mark the upward movement. We must infer that, if this had been

done with the full face and the figure with outspread arms, there would have been assuredly that comparative failure which has marked many subsequent paintings of the rising Christ. A full face has to turn towards the spectator; in the unskilled, unpracticed hands of the mediæval painter it would have been ugly, if drawn foreshortened with the chin in advance; but the profile can be drawn much more easily, in any position, as shown in Plate II. If Giotto, with that knowledge and power possible in 1305 to an artist thirty years old, had tried to use an attitude similar to that of Raphael's famous Transfiguration or Perugino's Ascension, he would have failed to secure a dignified and imposing figure. Long afterwards in the Peruzzi Chapel,[1] Giotto painted the Ascension of S. John, and used very nearly the same attitude as in the Christ of the Arena Chapel.

On either side of Christ are the adoring angels, reinforced in a curious way by spirits of the blessed—personages taken from the

[1] Church of Santa Croce, Florence.

heaven of Giotto's own realization of the Last Judgment. This detail has not been very generally followed by later artists. It is well to notice the extreme severity of the composition here, the drawing out of the figures in files of almost military accuracy; partly because the resources of the painter's art had not yet compassed the grouping of fifteen figures in space, some farther and some more near; and partly because of the expression of heavenly order and quiet sought to be given by the marshalled lines. These figures also are rising; they express perfectly the thought of accompanying the Saviour in his upward course. The short and feeble arms and unnaturally small hands are noticeable, if only because they raise the question whether Giotto acted deliberately here in denying himself the truth of nature. Did he not feel that those many raised arms and open hands, if of naturally relative size, would be too much for him to manage—too much for him to subordinate to the heads and the expression of the faces? And as for the choice of this ges-

ture, it may be thought the accepted expression, at the time, of adoring ecstasy; compare the attitude of the figures below, and those in the Raising of Lazarus.

The dignity of the lower figures is noticeable. It is true that in grace of line and grave harmony of masses Giotto cannot be thought to have improved upon the mosaics of Ravenna, Venice and Rome, made during the five centuries before his time. His business was to give realism, an open-air and every-day look to persons and things, while still retaining something of the stateliness of old tradition. And this is what we have to admire in these foreground figures. Even the art of the sixth,—even that of the sixteenth century may be asked in vain to give us a more dignified draped figure than the magnificent man with black hair and beard and patterned white robe, who kneels on the right. Of equal excellence is the kneeling Madonna, with drapery even more stately in its composition than that of the rising Christ. The other personages in the foreground kneel naturally,

raising the heads simply and slowly, moving the hands with unaffected expression. The two angels in the middle who point upward towards the ascending Christ are a little inferior in interest to the human personages, and one is puzzled by the comparative inferiority of the heads. Their drapery is modified to suit the requirement, which was thought to exist, of a priestly garment for each of these angels, for it is evident that the treatment of the orphreys and their combination with the breast-plate and the embroidered band of the neck, have direct reference to the priestly office. The wings are mere symbols, for the powerful means of flight given to angels by some painters of a time just later than that of Giotto have been thought out of place here, where the aerial movement is purely spiritual. And finally we have to notice the beauty of the composition, considered as a mere exercise in abstract lines; for the upward curves are managed with harmony and with a strong sense of the effect of each upon all the others. The quality of the painting cannot

be considered, it has been modified by six centuries of smoke and accident; and by partial restoration.

Plate III[1] shows one quarter of the ceiling of a famous chapel in Florence. This vault was painted by the followers of Giotto, men of the next generation; the work belonging to the years before 1350. We have no means of knowing how far the artists commonly named in connection with this work, Taddeo Gaddi and Simone Martini, were employed upon it. The picture shown is that immediately above the altar-wall. It gives the story of Christ walking on the water and saving Peter, who fears as he goes to meet his Lord. Fish in the sea, the kneeling figure with the angling rod and the owl behind him, we may take as in this case merely descriptive of the scene, giving solidity to the earth and aqueous character to the water by their presence. The intro-

[1] La Navicella di San Pietro, the ship with the disciples, with Christ saving Peter (S. Matthew 14: 24–33): Fresco painting on the vaulted roof of the Capella degli Spagnuoli, cloister of the Dominican Convent of S. Maria Novella at Florence. The ship itself may be thirteen feet long; the picture is about forty feet above the floor, and is seen wholly by reflected light.

Plate III.—LA NAVICELLA DI SAN PIETRO; FOLLOWERS OF GIOTTO.

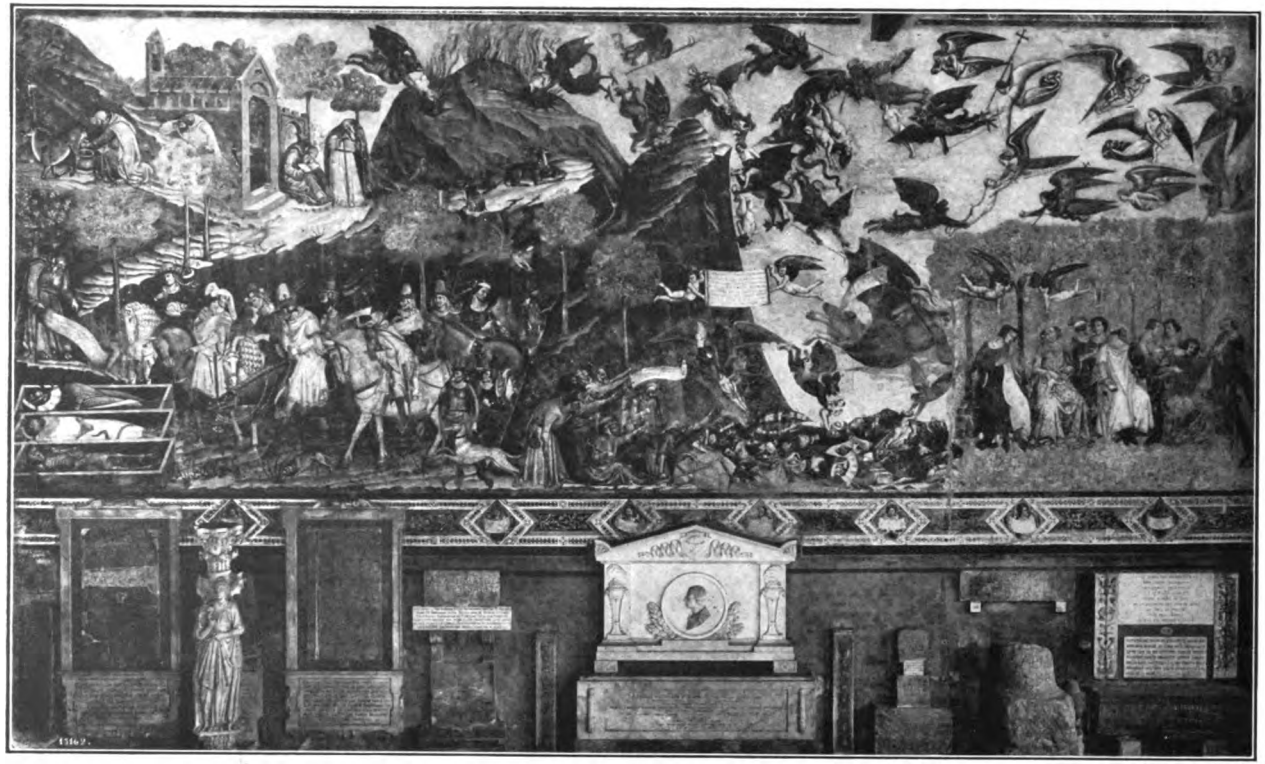

Plate IV.—IL TRIONFO DELLA MORTE; ASCRIBED TO P. LORENZETTI.

duction of a couple of embodied winds in the firmament can hardly be explained so readily; they are rather whimsical accessories put in by the artist, who, childlike, dreaded simplicity and could not understand that the clouded sky might be interesting in itself. Our chief business is, of course, with the persons in the boat and the two principal figures in the foreground at the right hand. And it may be said that all those figures suffer in the photograph from the hard prominence given to the details of the great border which frames in the pictorical composition. That is no one's fault, the camera plays those tricks with you, and the student must try to remember always that there is no such aggressive character given to the real colouring of the Renaissance scroll-work. The straight or slowly curving lines of the border have been repainted, perhaps frequently, and recently, while the picture itself was spared; but the white and nearly black emphasis of the lines and patches of flat colour are exaggerations of the camera.

It is easy to see that the faces are less individual and less well proportioned, also that the gestures are on the whole more realistic and better understood, than those of the undoubted work of Giotto seen in Plates I and II. It is evident that not too much stress was to be laid on the necessity of working the ship, because that would distract the attention from the miracle and the words of hope and promise; and therefore only three of the boat's crew are seen engaged in pulling on the halyards, and one holds the tiller though without attending to it very earnestly. The others are fixed in attention to the meeting of Jesus and Peter, or, in the case of a single figure, bowed down with grief and terror.

This is not as valuable a painting, nor as noble a composition, nor as perfect a piece of artistic conception as the Ascension shown in Plate II; but it is needed here in order that the conditions of painting in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may be better understood. Such painting was

primarily a matter of wall decoration and ceiling or vault decoration. The great surfaces of masonry had to be painted richly with lovely colours and graceful forms, and the custom of the times, no less than the sacred character of the important buildings then newly built, made it almost inevitable that biblical and Christian legendary subject should be chosen. This painting, then, is overhead, on the concave, swelling surface upon which the plaster is spread; but so much of the vault as was bounded by the two diagonal ribs seen at left and right and the vertical wall of which the top only is seen near the foot of the picture, was not so markedly concave, not so much rounded but that the picture could be painted as on a flat ceiling. But should pictures be painted on ceilings at all? You can only see them by lying on your back. That subject has to be met in another connection and with reference to paintings of more matured, more developed art.

Plate IV[1] shows the famous Triumph of Death, from the Campo Santo at Pisa. This picture, long ascribed to Andrea Orcagna, is now generally assigned to Pietro Lorenzetti. It is a rendering into Southern and Italian feeling of a sentiment still more generally felt and more frequently treated in the North of Europe; the pleasures and the glories of human life contrasted with the sudden termination of all things at the visitation of the Destroyer, and also with the horror and disgrace of physical death. On the left below is the favourite incident of the gaily dressed and well mounted knights and ladies, stopping suddenly before three open coffins in which are seen dead bodies, one of them, at least, in an advanced stage of decomposition. Among the horsemen is one who seems to be a pope and another who is certainly a crowned monarch. Above this large group is a suggestion of the life of the anchorites, one who milks a wild doe

[1] Il Trionfo della Morte: Fresco about fifty feet long on the south wall of the Campo Santo at Pisa, ascribed to Pietro Lorenzetti, b. abt. 1290, d. abt. 1348.

and others in meditation and in study near a chapel. In the middle of the picture is a mountain shown as part of the wilderness by the wild animals lying upon it, and open craters in this are marked as something more than mere holes in the earth, by the issuing of flames and their connection with the torments of the wicked as described below. On the extreme right the pleasures of life appear in a different form, ladies and nobles seated in the shade of a grove, with Cupids hovering overhead, while the figure of Death with bat-wings and a broad scythe appears flying downwards and towards a group, as if about to cut down this human harvest. To reach these favoured ones of the earth, Death has passed unheeding by a group of the helpless and suffering—beggars who hold out their hands to him in entreaty for release from life. The distance and the whole sky on this side are filled with the subject generally treated by the primitives as a part of the Last Judgment—the freeing of souls from the

grave, in the form, sometimes of children, sometimes of persons of full age, and their seizure by angels or by demons who fill the air with their wings spread in easy flight. There are grotesque happenings amid all this ineffable terror and distress.

This enormous painting need not now be considered as a study in colour or even in light and shade. It has been repainted in many of the most important passages, as has been perfectly recognized by recent critics, and its exposure to the open air[1] for nearly seven centuries has so changed the original effect of the work that it can no longer be judged as we judge a more recent or a more carefully sheltered painting. It is only the distribution of the subject, its general character, that concerns us here, but fortunately these are what can best be seen

[1] The ambulatory of the cloister is about forty-three feet wide and nearly as high—perhaps thirty-six feet to the tie-beam of the roof. The wall opposite the painting is pierced with arched openings, each about ten feet wide, with Gothic tracery but without glass; having narrow piers between them, piers which cannot exceed three feet six inches measured longitudinally in the wall, by a thickness nearly as great. Besides these window openings, there are six wide doorways which are not even filled with tracery.

in the reproduction, and it will be noted at once how completely the literary and philosophical movement of the age is reflected in the picture. In the Middle Ages men were not more worldly than this; when they rode out or when they sat at ease with music and with story-telling under the trees they might forget for a moment the pressure of their theological belief; but this was not for long; the spiritual world was nearer to the soul of every reflecting person than the visible world about him, and the all-pervading influence of the church made even jesting a solemn thing—unless indeed it was mere ribaldry. One had to be an absolute castaway, a reckless sinner indeed, to express any thought, solemn or light, without continual allusion to the presence in the background of death and the final judgment.

For a completely mundane subject one has to go to the illustrated books of the time. Such a book belongs to the magnificent library which the Duc d'Aumale brought together in his manor house of

Chantilly, and which he has left to the French people complete as a museum.

Plate V[1] is a miniature from that splendid manuscript, and shows in the background the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris rising above the roofs of that old palace of the king which stood in the reign of Charles V (1364–1380), on the larger island of the two which formed the very heart and centre of old Paris. The plans of that palace, restored from ancient documents with more or less perfect authenticity, are given by Viollet-le-Duc in his great dictionary, Fig. 4 in the article *Palais:* although he does not seem to have known of this miniature which in part contradicts his scheme. It will be seen from this that the largest round tower stands for that great keep called the Tour de Montgomery, built in the reign of St. Louis. The large buildings in front of it and to the left of it were built by Philip the Fair and subsequent kings of France, and the wall with battlements framing the

[1] View of the Palace of the Kings of France, with the Sainte-Chapelle. Miniature in the Book of Hours of John, Duke of Berry (1340–1416); now in the Library of Chantilly.

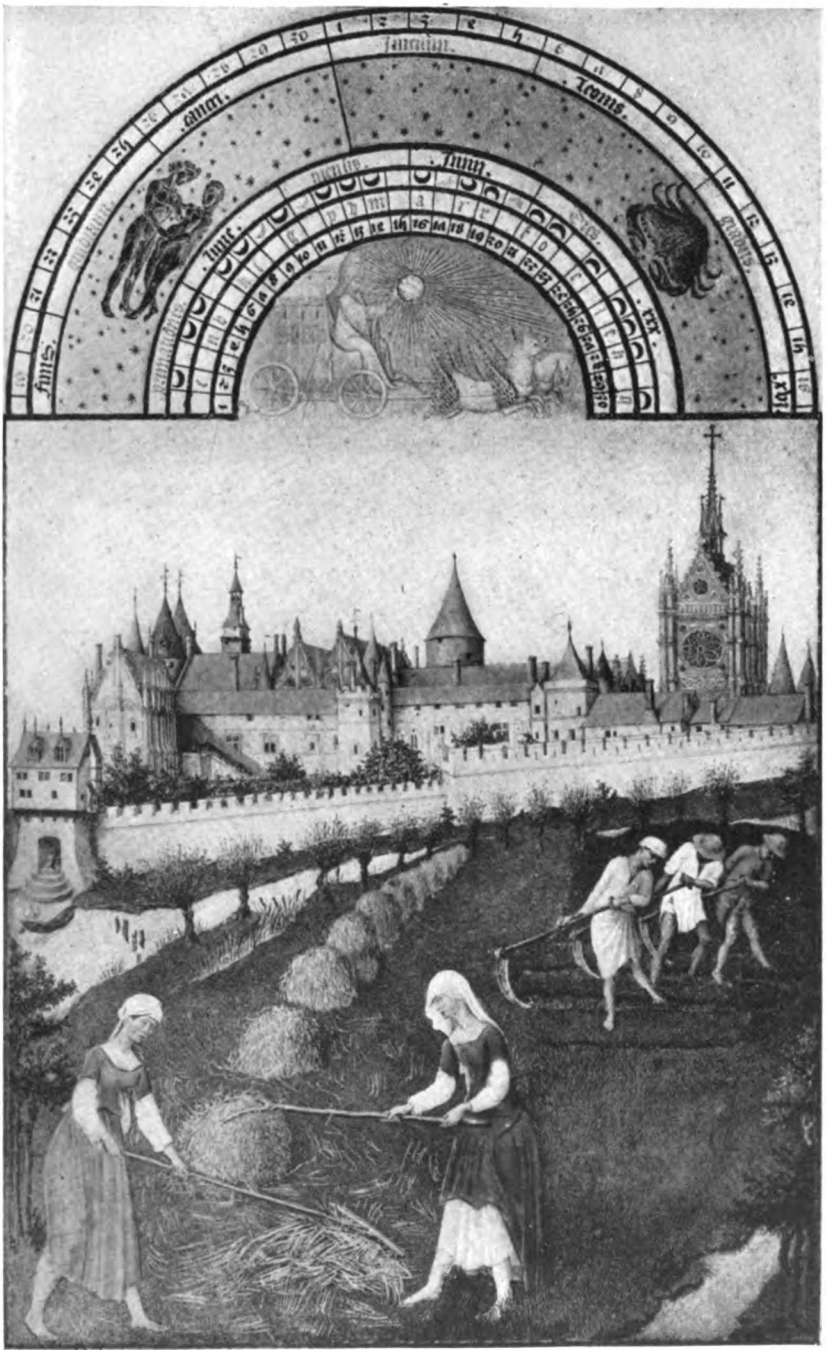


Plate V.—THE OLD PALACE ON THE ISLAND OF THE SEINE.

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Plate VI.—THE TRIBUTE MONEY; MASACCIO.

front of the building on the western side separates the palace enclosure from the open gardens or, as the picture shows, the hayfield and the orchard rather, which occupied that part of the island where now is the Place Dauphine. The famous Sainte-Chapelle, already a century old, is seen on the right; and rather faithfully drawn. At the left, the high square tower and the two round towers, all with pointed roofs, also stand to-day. The light dress of the mowers and indeed that of the haymakers in the foreground are abundantly confirmed by other contemporary pictures: evidently it was much the custom in the fourteenth century to strip to your work. On the extreme left of the picture is seen a door with water-stairs near which a boat seems to be tied, but the photograph has not shown well the line of shore at that point, nor the landing from which the road goes upward under the palace walls.

In the Church of the Carmine at Florence one of the chapels is known by the family name of the Brancacci, and it is upon the

walls of this chapel that the marvellous renovator of art, Tomaso Guidi, called Masaccio, first made his power evident. All the students of Florentine art and of this epoch agree that Masaccio lived only to the age of twenty-seven, and that the work in the Brancacci Chapel was done during his last four or five years. On the narrow upright piers he painted nudes—the Temptation perhaps, the Expulsion from Paradise unquestionably, and these of a vigor and insight hardly surpassed by a few sixteenth century giants. In a number of large oblong pictures he presented a series of Biblical and legendary events in the life of S. Peter, and of these the principal one on the left hand as you enter the little chapel is the fresco shown in Plate VI,[1] The Tribute Money. In the centre Christ gives instructions to his disciples, while the tax-gatherer waits with expectant gesture; on

[1] The Tribute Money (S. Matthew 17: 24–27): Fresco on wall of the Brancacci Chapel in the Carmelite Church (Il Carmine) at Florence. The work of Tomaso Guidi called Masaccio, b. 1401, d. 1428–9. As this fresco is in the second row, it is about nine feet from floor to lower edge: it is about ten feet long.

the left Peter, stripped to the task, is seen drawing up the fish from whose mouth he takes the money; and on the right the money is being paid to the tax collector. The story is told in a very simple way, the incidents—all three of them—are presented together in the same composition, and while the tax-gatherer appears twice, S. Peter is seen in each of the three parts of the design. The manner in which the draped figures are drawn and composed, each by itself, and most of all the charm of composition as shown in the central group of fourteen figures, make this an amazing achievement for the time of its execution. It is evident to one who studies this group, which, even in the little outline given by Crowe and Cavalcaselle seems marvellous (so strong is its organization) that there is no such striving after novelty as would have set Masaccio to seek for other principles of design than those established by Giotto; but there is an advance in knowledge—in that complete and thorough observation which is the pride of later and perfected drawing.

When so much is gained, something is lost. The contemporaneous frescoes by Masolino da Panicale (as at Castiglione in the lake-country of Lombardy, forty miles northwest of Milan) and the later works by Benozzo Gozzoli, and Paolo Uccello,—even many by Perugino, deal with the costume of the time, and show how to treat it artistically. With Masaccio and his followers, skill in composition led to a new care for stately lines and dignity. The varied and attractive costume of Central Italy was thought unfit for grand design, and a dress was specially composed for biblical personages as presented in painting. It is a commonplace of the biographers that Raphael's great Vatican frescoes repeated the figures and the groupings of this and other splendid compositions of Masaccio.

As Giotto brought reality into an art that had been formal and traditional, so did Masaccio give power and knowledge to the art as Giotto had left it. Indeed, there is not in the history of art, since the close of antiquity, so remarkable an instance of a

youthful genius achieving complete and rounded success, in spite of a backward state of knowledge in his community, within the lapse of so few years from his apprenticeship. Nor will the reader fail to note that neither the youth of the man nor yet his great original power has induced him to give a realistic turn to the scene. It is clear that he drew these sacred personages with long and voluminous drapery just as he drew the nude Adam and Eve: it was in this way that Biblical personages should be represented. The tax-gatherer is shown in the dress of the time, short tunic and tight stockings to distinguish him from the disciples, who are draped in long cloaks —modifications by the study of classical drapery of the monks' gowns which Masaccio saw about him. These long cloaks are as ill adapted to the somewhat broken ground upon which the figures stand and to the open country generally, as the tax-gatherer's costume is suitable; we are left to understand that his chief purpose was the setting of his sacred personages before the

Florentines in a seemly and even clerical order.

Here, then, in these nude and these heavily draped figures, is the beginning of that which we call figure drawing. It is to be traced onwards from this time without serious delay or obstruction for 200 years; nor has it ever been lost since that time. Artists have been led astray by affectation or by presumptuous efforts beyond their strength, whole epochs have been vulgarized by other than artistic influences, but the door to excellence in drawing has been open, ever since Masaccio's time, to every one who might choose to study the figure with such accepted conventions of structure as would tend to the greater dignity of the design on the flat surface. One does not draw an apostle quite as he studies the nude athlete who may serve him as a model; in this, as in the casting of the drapery, there is much deference to tradition—but of all this there is question frequently in the course of this essay.

Plate VII[1] is the Coronation of the Virgin, that one of Fra Angelico's pictures which a recent writer, Mr. Langton Douglas, calls "the last and the greatest of the friar's glorified miniatures." The friar is, of course, that Dominican monk who, without having been sainted, has been beatified, so that his full name and title is Beato Angelico da Fiesole. Fiesole is that little town, looking down upon Florence from its hilltop, which seems to have always prospered as Florence grew weak, and to have passed into slight mundane importance in view of the modern glories of the better-known city. This splendid picture, Plate VII, though called by our enthusiastic biographer "a glorified miniature" is not a miniature in the sense of being small. The great system of rays which, starting from a point behind the seated figures, nearly fills the height of the picture, is wrought in gold on the gesso which forms

[1] The Coronation of the Virgin: Tempera painting on wood, about four feet high, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence; the work of Fra Angelico da Fiesole (1387–1455).

the background, the gold-leaf being applied directly upon the surface, and upon this golden surface as upon the darker ground on either side are painted the figures of the heavenly host and of the adoring ransomed souls. Nearly half the surface, then, blazes with the reflection of the daylight from the burnished gold; but this in no way harms the refined beauty of the composition in colour. This colour is pure and bright—a vivid composition of red and blue, white and purple, each hue distinguished from all the others in unmistakable fashion, and yet subdued softly and truly by admirable gradation in its own complementary colours. Composition may exist in colours, even in pure and bright hues, as readily as in light and shade—as readily as in line. Indeed one who is a colourist will be apt to compose chiefly in colour, putting red here and there because the other hues require its presence: and then the person who is not very sensitive to colour wonders whether there is any composition at all. The painting in tempera, with pure pigments carefully prepared

and lightly laid on, gives to each completed patch of the mosaic, as we may call it, a perfect solidity, so that neither the blistering and peeling of carelessly laid work nor the fading of the pigments which still cling to the background is to be feared.

As regards the question of sacred significance in such a picture, we have to remember that an artist of perfectly single-minded and patient spirit, applying himself to such work as this in the full belief that it was a sacred calling as well as a human manual art which he had to follow, would naturally, if his technical power was great enough, give this gentle and tranquil appearance to the whole by means of the perfect modulation of each part. If you are strong enough to paint the face as well as these faces are painted, putting as much of delicate modulation into a space two inches high, filled with a never ceasing gradation, which passes from the warm glow of shade to the highest light, and again to the darker hue of the hair; and if the same or a proportionate skill and care is given to the glowing

mass of drapery in each case; the result will be such a great jewel as this picture is, and that jewel will produce the same effect, on persons religious and worldly alike. The question of greater or less interest in the picture will be not dependent upon the pietism of the beholder as much as upon his natural disposition to observe and to care about forms and colours. There are many persons of refined thought who cannot associate refinement or thought with forms and colours. They are the persons to whom the appeal must be in the language of words or in the language of music.

It seems that nothing but the continued tranquillity of the religious life would have given, in the fifteenth century, that power to paint rightly and simply—to the purpose as far as quiet motion and graceful attitude are concerned; and yet with no result foreign to the gentle tone of heavenly repose. I am trying to discover what it is in the working of the artist's mind and hand that conveys this sense of religious calm which every one accepts as the key-note of An-

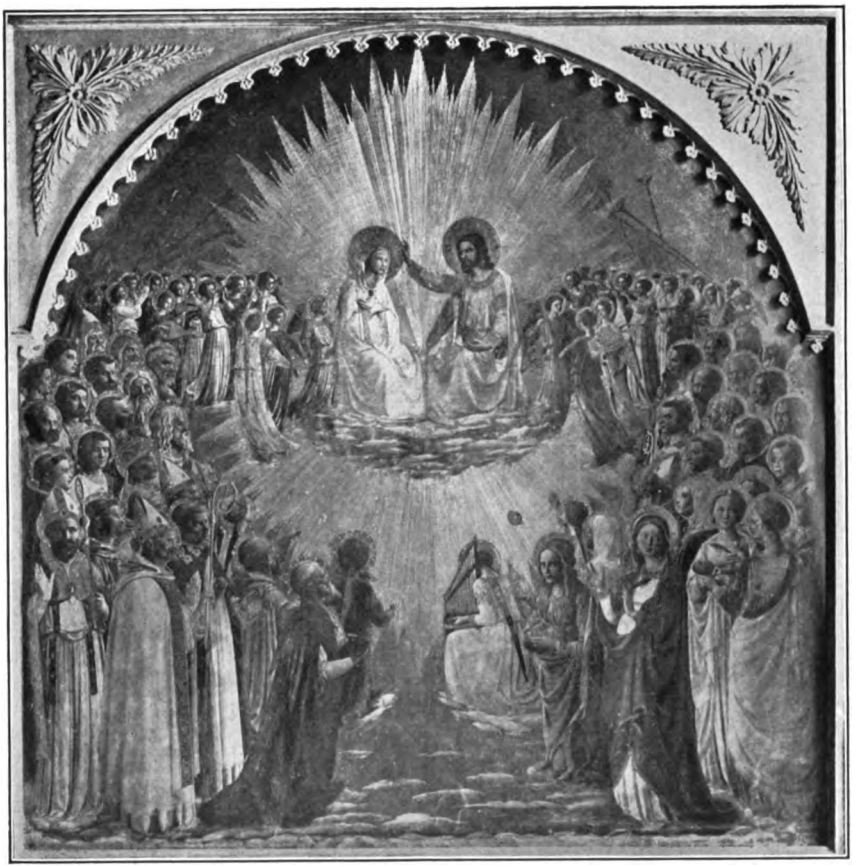

Plate VII.—THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN; FRA ANGELICO.

Plate VIII.—THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN; FRA LIPPO LIPPI.

gelico's work. No one else has been so able a designer, so well fitted by nature and by teaching for the production of colour composition, who has also been so unambitious in his life. To find colour of equal though different charm we have to go to a later age and to another town, where the art of painting was no longer in the hands of tranquil monks, but belonged to the servants of earthly splendour.

# CHAPTER III

## THE EPOCH OF EARLY TRIUMPH

About twenty years after the painting of that Coronation of the Virgin by Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, he also a Florentine monk, but a Carmelite not a Dominican, painted the curious picture shown in Plate VIII.[1] It is the work of a stronger man than Fra Angelico, a man stronger intellectually, with more scope and range and a better draughtsman of the figure. To carry this comparison one step further, we should say that Lippi was also a much greater master of composition than Fra Angelico ever showed himself to be. We do not know what the Dominican might have done had he been a painter of varied subjects, of mundane subjects, of people as they lived and moved about the streets of

[1] The Coronation of the Virgin: Tempera painting on wood, about eight feet long, in the Academy of Fine Arts, at Florence; the work of Fra Filippo Lippi, b. about 1412, d. 1469.

Florence. What he tried to do he did beautifully, with pure and exquisite colour, and with composition sufficient to its purposes; but we have no reason to suppose that he could have handled the huddled grouping of the Lippi picture (Plate VIII) with even that partial success which we see there. The picture has been injured and repainted. These defacements do not tell seriously in the photograph, and our purpose is rather with the treatment of the subject than the more purely manual excellence of the work. John the Baptist on the extreme right seems to introduce to the Heavenly Presence the monk Lippi himself, and an angel only half seen in the foreground lifts a scroll with the inscription Is Perfecit Opus—"he (this man) finished the work." I have said "the Heavenly Presence," and yet the peculiarity is in the very earthly look of the personages in front and the earthly nature of their occupations, looking, as they are, everywhere except towards the Divine Mystery which is shown above. Angels represented as fair young

women, with flower-crowned heads and carrying lilies, almost fill the background, though among them are a few monks and an earthly woman or two. This is the picture that struck Robert Browning's fancy so strongly and made him use as the culminating passage of his poem "Fra Lippo Lippi" a description of the composition. The picture is charming in many ways—in the heads, in the attitudes, in the treatment of the attributes of the saints—and it must have been lovely in color: but it is to be remembered as an altar-piece painted for the nunnery at Sant' Ambrogio. When considered from this point of view, as a deliberately prepared religious picture, it is a singular anomaly.

The son of that Filippo Lippi is known by the father's name with the diminutive added to it—Filippino Lippi, but his father in art was rather Sandro Botticelli. It is from him, no doubt, that the refined and even abstract character of Filippino's religious paintings is chiefly derived. An exquisite round in the Pitti Palace, is given in

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Plate IX.—MADONNA, CHILD AND ANGELS; FILIPPINO LIPPI.

Plate X.—LA PRIMAVERA; SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

Plate IX.[1] The Madonna kneels upon a terrace, surrounded by a most carefully designed parapet, and beyond and through the parapet is seen a lovely landscape of the early primitive character which we associate with paintings a century earlier than this one. John the Baptist, as a child, kneels at the head of the Divine Infant, and five angels represented as youthful winged figures, feminine in appearance, scatter flowers or kneel in adoration. The picture is large for its subject and character; it is painted with great care and thoroughness, and it is as completely a devotional picture in subject and in treatment—the ideal painting to decorate a shrine,—as the work of the older man (Plate VIII) seems to be an earthly conception painted without religious purpose. The reader will understand that positive attribution is impossible in such cases. We are not now judging either of the two artists,

[1] The Madonna adoring the Divine Child: Tempera painting on wood, four feet in diameter, in the Gallery of the Pitti Palace, at Florence; probably the work of Filippino Lippi; b. about 1455, d. 1505.

for if we were, we should need a more uninjured picture than the Coronation of the Virgin, a more certainly authentic picture than the roundel in the Pitti Palace. The same exaggerated gentleness and grave tranquillity of womanhood, shown in the Madonna of Plate IX, is associated in our minds with the Madonnas of the man whom we have called the master of Filippino; and the painting in its primitive character, in its love of pure decoration for its own sake—a love shown as plainly in the landscape treatment as in the railings, the carved marble, the mosaic and the living birds and lizards in the foreground; all are as important to our subject as if we had the absolute certainty that every part of the work was by Filippino Lippi himself. But we will proceed to consider this romantic treatment of a scene in connection with the greater master, Sandro Botticelli.

The famous picture shown in Plate X,[1]

[1] Metaphorical picture, called Spring, or the Triumph of Spring: Tempera painting on wood, eleven feet four inches long, in the Academy of Fine Arts, at Florence; the work of Alessandro (Sandro) Filipepi called Botticelli (1447–1515).

and known as *Primavera*, or the Triumph of Spring, hangs in the Academy at Florence. It must have been painted a year or two before or after the Filippino picture (Plate IX). Many pages of argument have been used by different writers in the explanation of this remarkable picture, but it cannot be said that the full significance has been determined. The presiding personage, over whose head hovers a little Cupid, directing his bow elsewhere than to her, has been called Venus, has been called Simonetta, the mistress of Giuliano de Medici, has been called the goddess of Spring. She stands in the middle distance, much further from us than the Three Graces (if they are Graces) at the left, and yet she is of a stature apparently as great as they—it may be that she is meant to be of more than human proportions. That group on the left, the three lightly dressed ladies who entwine in a stately dance, are accompanied by an unmistakable Mercury or Hermes, who is armed with the curved falchion which he loaned Perseus, and oc-

cupied either in knocking fruit from an orange-tree or, as one writer suggests, in calling a cloud which seems to wreathe itself about his caduceus. Another group on the right of the picture seems to be headed by Flora—the goddess Flora—so richly is she bedecked with flowers in embroidery and of natural growth. The lightly draped woman next to her must certainly be the embodiment of Spring, for, as the Wind-god, Æolus or Zephyr, stoops from above to seize her, she turns to him and flowers fall from between her lips.

It is the penalty of metaphorical thought in art and in literature that it is not rightly understood except by the generation—perhaps even by the living society—which gave it birth.

The most usual form of the well understood, the obvious subject, is found in some one of the religious topics most in people's minds. Nothing fills so large a part of life as religion, among all communities where there is a generally accepted belief and a generally accepted practice of devo-

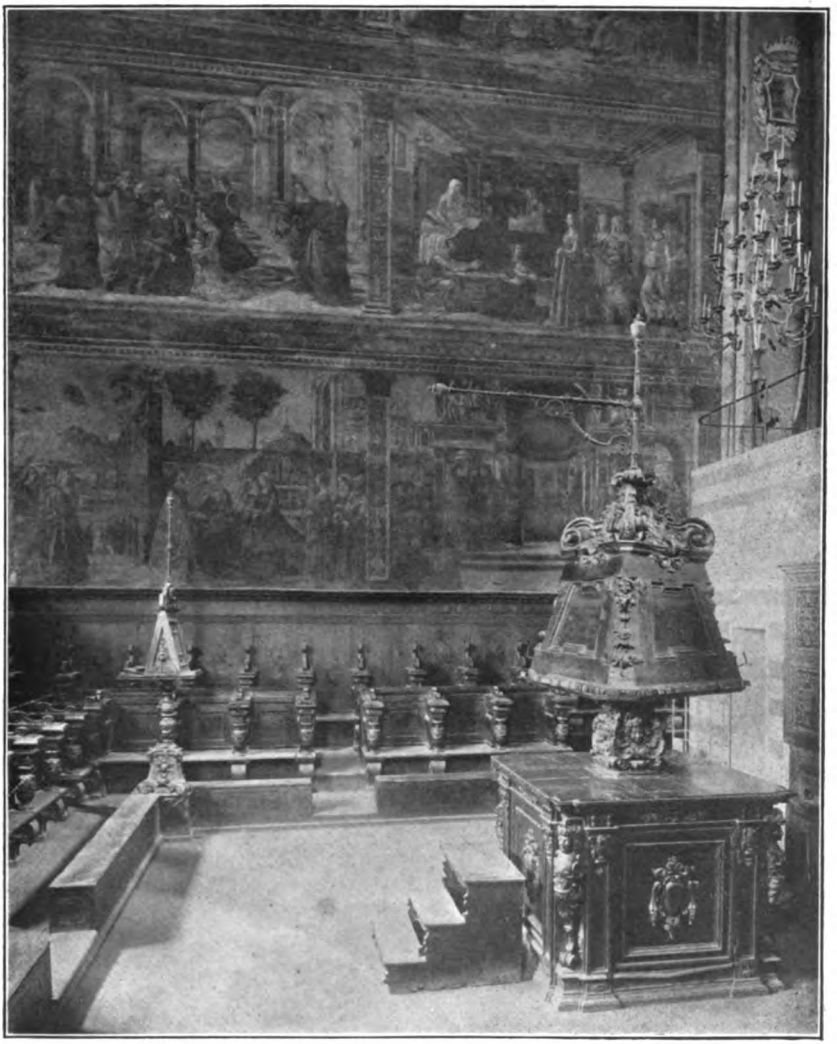

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Plate XI.—CHOIR OF S. M. NOVELLA.

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Plate XII.—THE VISITATION; GHIRLANDAIO.

tion. So in Florence at the close of the fifteenth century every one could understand the pictures on the wall of a chapel or on the wall of the choir itself, of a great metropolitan church. Santa Maria Novella had been, indeed, the church of a Dominican convent, a less important institution than the laboratory where medicines and cordials were made and dispensed. The great cloister, the Spanish Chapel (see Plate III), were the necessary shelter and surroundings of a busy monkish community. But these times were past, and in 1490 the church had grown to be nearly what it is now. Plate XI[1] shows that side of the choir which is on the right hand of a person entering it from the nave. The light which fills it comes from a great window in what would be the east wall, were the church properly orientated.[2] The choir

[1] View in the choir of the Church of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, with paintings by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–1494).

[2] Orientated: In church planning, turned towards the East, that is to say, since the early days of the Latin church, with the high altar at the eastern end of the church so that the officiating priest who stands facing the altar with his back to the people, will face the East. The necessity for this is almost

is short and nearly square, and it has no large and open archway leading from the nave, for the high altar stands there, and the little organ which is seen in the right on the picture is behind the altar; all this because the building is still a monkish church, and not one arranged primarily for public worship. The pictures which we see on this wall behind the stalls are four of the seven by that Domenico Bigordi whom we call Ghirlandaio. The legendary story of the Virgin and that history, chiefly Biblical, which relates to S. John the Baptist, are set face to face in a curious way on these two opposite walls, as if both were taken together as a history of the Saviour before the beginning of his ministry. The lowest picture on the left, and the one most in sight in our illustration (Plate XI) is, of course, the Visitation—and this forms the subject of Plate XII.[1] The meeting of

always assumed in the north of Europe, but in Italy it is little regarded. The Church of Santa Maria Novella is turned with its choir towards the north-northeast, or nearly so, the front built by Alberti facing more nearly south than southwest on the Piazza which is named from the Church.

[1] The Visitation: Fresco about eighteen feet long, in the choir

Mary and Elizabeth is represented here as a stately affair prepared beforehand, as if it had been foreseen that it would be the subject for written and painted description. Elizabeth seems to have called up her maidens as if she had been a queen, to receive Mary's visit; and indeed the building on the right, with its stately Renaissance doorway, its draw-bridge beneath which are seen the buildings of the town, its outworks where young men stand looking over the dwarf parapet wall, are, all of them, the concomitants of an almost regal home. On the left and outside the high wall which shows edgewise, and in perspective, is one of those steep streets common in the Italian hill towns, with a staircase or ramp *a cordoni;* and chance comers are mounting the steep slope; and at the head of this incline is a group of three ladies who seem, in a way, to have accompanied Mary, though this is not clearly made out. Now the assertion made above, that a sub-

of the Church of Santa Maria Novella; by Domenico Bigordi, called Ghirlandajo or Grillandajo.

ject of this kind is more easily understood than one not concerned with the religion of the day, is to be modified slightly, because there is, indeed, no subject here. Consider what the actual meeting of Mary and Elizabeth must have been—the humble surroundings, as of a small Syrian town, the evident secrecy or at least privacy of the meeting, the intimate talk between the two women—consider this and then note how completely the artist has disregarded all possible or conceivable facts, and has given the monks what they wanted to adorn their church—a stately group, a noble setting in a landscape filled with rich and varied architecture and an elaborate combination of rich and delicate hues; a colour-piece of very considerable merit, and a most interesting and personal appeal to all spectators in the characteristic portrait-like faces of nine charming youthful women, with one matronly older woman. There is, then, no subject at all, no more than the presenting of graceful figures in a pleasant landscape, no more than we find

in the seventeenth century Dutch pictures of interior incident. It was necessary that the Visitation should be on the choir wall; and Ghirlandaio knew perfectly what was required—he knew his business as a decorative painter—he produced this lovely fresco as one of a set, six of the same size and one so large as to fill the lunette above: the seven taken together to fill the whole wall above the woodwork of the stalls. Now, the appreciation of such a picture as this is almost wholly non-religious. We are hardly concerned with the questions which arise in connection with a picture like the Fra Angelico Coronation (Plate VII). We have not even to consider the religious enthusiasm, the devotion, the purity of that kind which is expressible in art; for indeed this art is only so far religious that its tranquillity and simplicity of conception come in large part from the previous years of simple, rapid, easy, well-understood conventionalities; ample drapery, studied originally from classical examples and restudied over and over again,

each artist copying with modifications the work of his predecessor; so much of accuracy and power in drawing the figure, as that no one shall feel that the draped women are impossible beings; a love of pretty patterns shown not merely in the brocades worn by some of the figures or the borders on the simpler garments of others, but also in the background itself—here in an imitation of relief sculpture, there in a mere painting of the details of church and tower and the working of them into a pleasing background design—these are the things which, apart from the painting itself, the use of colours and values, the picture offers. One may love these pictures more than all other specimens of graphic art, and may come to know Ghirlandaio intimately well, so that in the cellar of a London shop one will start on meeting a picture and ask whence came the Ghirlandaio; or again one may deal with the picture as Ruskin has done, describing it with its whole series in a half pitying, half contemptuous way as mere ornamentation,

where religious zeal might have been looked for.

In judging such pictures as this we have to keep in mind their setting, their surroundings, their evident purpose. It is for that reason that Plate XI has been introduced; to show how plain are those Italian interiors when considered without their painted decoration. The Arena Chapel might have been shown to better explain Plates I and II; the Brancacci Chapel, for the sake of Plate VI; and these would have seemed as naked as the choir of Santa Maria Novella. Even the vaulted halls in which are painted the Giottos of Assisi, the Michelangelos of the Sistine Chapel, as described below, and even the Giottesque pictures of which one is shown in Plate III, are left smooth and bare, waiting for the final coat of plaster on which, while still wet, the frescoes are to be painted. So that the whole adornment is left to the fresco-painter: and he, much preferring his human figures and his landscape to any borders of scroll-work, composes his par-

allelograms of gentle coloring and harmonized light and shade with an intention primarily and essentially artistic.

It was to this result that the Italian taste in architecture and the Italian tendency towards surface decoration in colour had come. The classical revival in architecture was for nothing in this tendency: the neo-classic churches like the pseudo-Gothic churches provided broad, smooth, unbroken walls. Very different was the spirit of the north of Europe.

All the great arts which depended upon Gothic architecture and were closely allied with it, were immensely stronger in the north than in Italy, and the close of the fifteenth century found the Flamboyant Gothic in full strength in France, and in the provinces to the North and to the South of the French domain. It will not do to say that the Renaissance had not begun, because everything depends upon what you mean by "the Renaissance." It is quite customary among the French critical writers of the years since 1880 to speak of

the Renaissance in France as including that Florid Gothic, that magnificent Flamboyant style which began after the close of the miserable Hundred Years' War, and lasted from 1450 until 1510 or thereabouts. But mural painting, though never absent from the French churches, had no such chance to develop and mature itself as in Italy. In the lands of Gothic art, wall painting is not as strong as architectural sculpture and statuary, nor as transparent colour-design in what we call "stained glass," nor as wrought iron in the endless combinations of hammer-work and welding. And yet schools of painters were growing up in France, in Flanders, on the Rhine: and it is the great achievement of our archæology to-day to recompose the history of this neglected art.

Plate XIII[1] is a triptych which quite certainly belongs to the reign of Charles VIII of France (reigned 1483–98). The

[1] The Madonna and Child adored by Pierre de Bourbon Lord of Beaujeu, regent of France, from 1483 to 1490, and his wife Anne, daughter of Louis XI: Triptych in the Cathedral of Moulins (Allier), France. By an unknown artist, probably French, but a student of Italian painting.

kneeling personage in the compartment at the left is Pierre II of Bourbon, with his guardian saint, S. Peter, clothed as a pope and bearing the sacred keys; and the personage in the right hand wing is his wife Anne, the famous Lady of Beaujeu, with Saint Anne, mother of the Virgin. Judging by the age of the persons, it must have been after their regency, that is during the active reign of Charles VIII, that this picture was painted, namely, between 1494 and 1498. There is something very interesting in the northern system—the northern design—combined with an advanced state of the art of painting. The work is indeed so skillful in composition and so masterly in handling, that the very careful and intelligent critics of the retrospective exhibition at Paris in 1900, Émile Molinier and his fellow authors, hesitate to declare it to be French. Of that exhibition, held in *le Petit Palais*, this painting was an important part, and was shown almost for the first time to the world of students. Here was the work of a northern man who

Plate XIII.—TRIPTYCH, THE LORD AND LADY OF BEAUJEU.

Plate XIV.—MADONNA, CHILD AND SAINTS; ASCRIBED TO LUIGI VIVARINI.

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had much of the Flemish sense of drawing both the figure and drapery, and had also learned much from the painting of the Italians. Three years later there was held in the Pavillon Marsan of the Louvre an *Exposition des Primitifs français;* this picture was shown again, and this time in close comparison with a larger number of nearly contemporary northern pictures. And so, in the slowly developing history of French painting (which has never had a Vasari) a personality has been declared to exist—the painter of this triptych and of other fine pictures—and whom we call for the present *le Maître de Moulins* with reference to the town in which this triptych is preserved.

The work of the miniaturists—the painters of pages in splendid manuscript books—has left its traces in this picture in the methods used in representing faces, dresses, movements of the body; but still more is the great school of Gothic sculpture seen influencing the whole composition, and more especially the attitudes of the figures. It is interesting to see so much of that real-

ism in gesture, so much informal and naturalistic movement and so much free play of drapery, while the subject remains so formally ecclesiastical. The very folding chair upon which the Madonna sits takes the picture out of the category of southern work, for the Venetian would have given her a magnificent marble throne as in Plate XIV. A Tuscan of 1490 would never have painted the drapery in such a style—so closely copied from the facts of every-day costume. Perhaps the artist remembered that his human personages had sat for their portraits and must be clothed as they were clothed in life, and he was unwilling to use the grandiose classical drapery such as Masaccio would have delighted in seventy-five years before, (see Plate VI), and such as Leonardo, studying at the same epoch, was making his own (see Plate XVII).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EPOCH OF ACHIEVEMENT

WITH plate XIV[1] we come again to the consideration of the subject suggested a few pages above, the subject of the Venetian point of view and the Venetian processes. The city mentioned, though not by name, on page 59 is Venice, and we have even now to turn to the beginnings of Venetian art and to see in the work of Luigi Vivarini the early manifestations of that marvellous combination of all qualities, the greatest which the world has known. The picture is dated 1480 (see the little tablet inlaid in the plinth below the Virgin's throne), nor do modern critics dispute this date. This picture, then, is fifty-five years later than the Tribute Money by Masaccio. The figures are of about the same size as those

[1] The Madonna and Child, with Saints : Painting on wood, six feet six inches long, in the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice; ascribed to Luigi (Alvixe or Alvise) Vivarini, d. 1499.

of the Masaccio fresco. The Vivarini picture is painted in oil, and it may be, as some of the writers on Venetian painting would have it, that the artist had not quite mastered the somewhat novel process; but nothing that we can consider in the black-and-white picture before us has to do with any such defect. To the student of the uncolored composition there is nothing but an advance in freedom of movement. S. Francis on the right of the spectator has to show the stigmata on his hands, and the natural gesture by which this is managed is certainly a model of graceful adaptation of means to an end. Behind him S. Bernardino of Siena makes a gesture of admiration or of surprise, while on the other side S. Anthony of Padua holds the white lily sacred to the Madonna and looks intently upon the Child. The robed and mitred bishop is called S. Bonaventura, though one authority calls him S. Louis of Toulouse, that same Bishop Louis from whom is named that Mexican province and town which we often hear of, San Luis Obispo.

The figures in the background are, of course, S. Joachim and S. Anne, father and mother of the Virgin.

It is curious to see the important part given in the picture to the marble throne upon which the Virgin is seated. It is expressive in a way of the peculiar form assumed by the artistic mastery of Venice, the decorative character of all her fine art. To a Venetian painter, whether an early man like Vivarini of Murano or one of his great successors in the field, it was not a lowering of his art that he should treat that throne with such minute and loving care. The careful design of the crowning-piece, the fronton with its applied ornaments and the curiously modified entablature below, all expressive of that Renaissance freedom in the treatment of classical art which has been lost to the world since that time, is not more carefully designed than the simpler moulded frame and panels below. And the whole is treated with as much care as the draped figure of S. Francis—the outline in the one case considered as

lovingly as in the other. Now, the sooner the student comes to understand that this is the true painter-like way of viewing such details in a picture, the sooner he will come to an appreciation of painting of all sorts; and not painting only, but black-and-white work, chalk-drawing, wood engraving—what you will. The art of graphic representation is always in a bad way when the artist cares more about the moral purpose behind his art than for the visible fact of it. If the human figure, even of a saint or an angel, is to be drawn with more loving and patient care than the architectural member, that is because the figure is capable of receiving more. There is more chance for refinement, more chance for diverse and unexpected effect, more chance for delicacy and for splendour alike in the treatment of nude or draped human figures, than in any sculptured or architecturally distributed masses of marble. When, however, the human figures are themselves standing rigid, or at least in fixed and determined attitudes, forming part of a

triumph like this one, a frank piece of symbolism, — then the interest in the figures and the interest in the delicate object which has no human life, approach one another in intensity. In the instance before us, paint out S. Anne and S. Joachim, and the picture would remain, though marred; paint out the throne, and the picture would be modified out of recognition.

A great man, a more profound and a loftier spirit by far than Vivarini, was that famous Giovanni Bellini of whom Albert Dürer wrote so touchingly in a letter from Venice in 1506, that he was "very old indeed but yet the best among the painters"—that is to say, in Venice. One great work of his is a very large altar-piece, shown in Plate XV.[1] It is dated on the Madonna's throne in the central compartment, 1488, and there is no doubt of the accuracy of this figure. It is evident that the magnificent frame of gilded

[1] Altar piece in three compartments, about eight feet six inches wide, over all; in the Church of S. M. Gloriosa dei Frari, at Venice; the paintings, Virgin and Child with Saints, by Giovanni Bellini (1428–1516).

wood with its highly wrought architectural composition counted for much, and that the painter willingly lent himself to a decoration of which that frame would be always an important element. And again there is no doubt that such work appeared to the artist, however devotional, however sincere his piety may have been, as a piece of decoration, primarily. It was ecclesiastical decoration, of course; but, even as the sculpture of the portal or of the altar-front, so this picture might remain a work of devotion, a religious work, and still be painted in complete harmony with a decorative theme. The distinction had not been made in the mind of such an artist. To paint a Madonna and Child with attendant child-angels, accompanied by S. Nicholas and S. Benedict and two other sacred personages, was to choose the accepted subject for a large and brilliant painting to be set up forever as the reredos of a great church, and it would never have occurred to him to sacrifice the decorative effect of such a composition for any supposedly pietistic motive

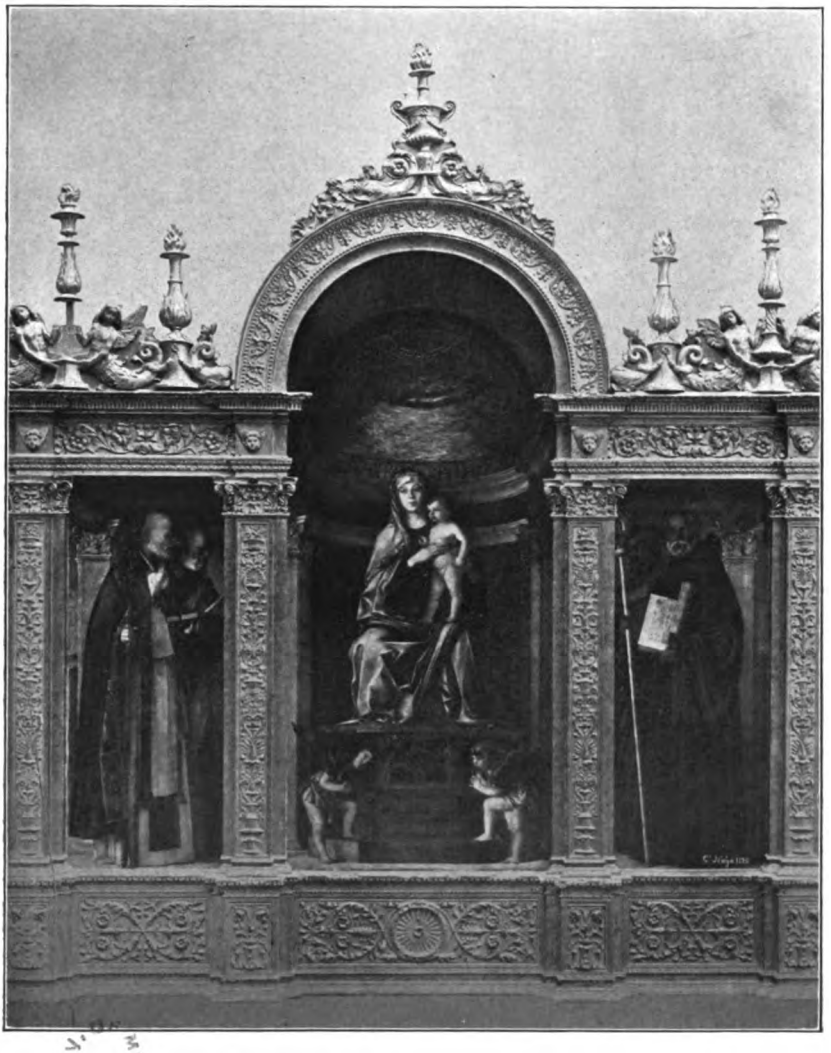

Plate XV.—ALTARPIECE; GIOVANNI BELLINI.

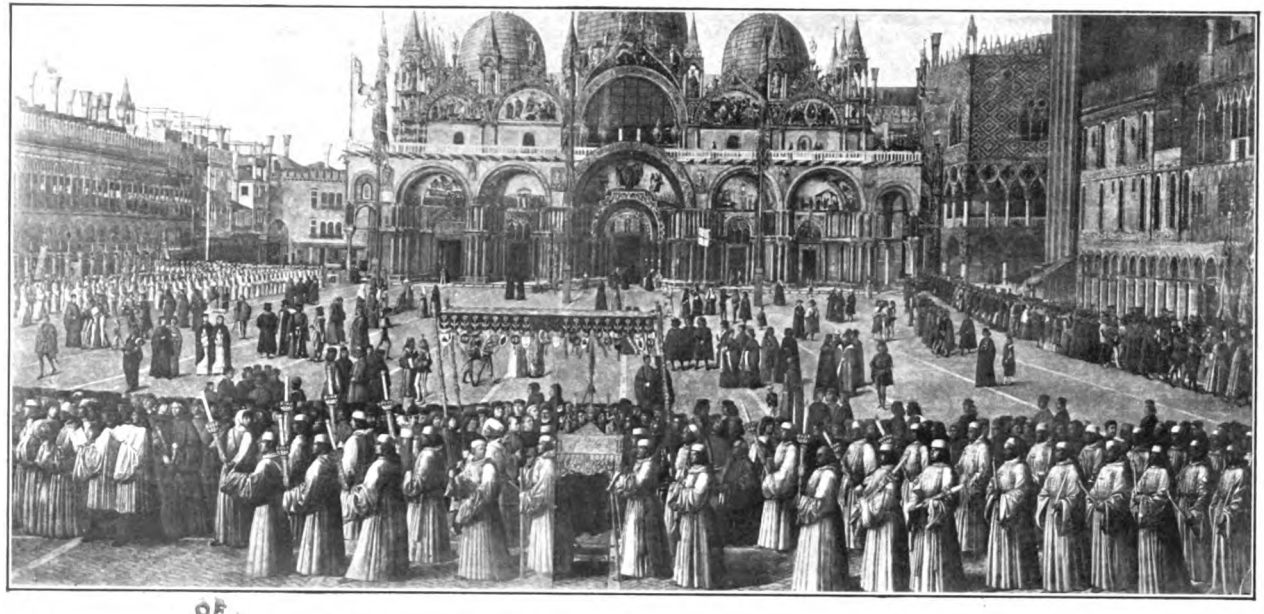

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Plate XVI.—THE PROCESSION OF THE SACRAMENT; GENTILE BELLINI.

whatsoever. The introduction of S. Benedict in the right hand panel is probably intended as homage done to the great organizer of conventual life, as distinguished from the life of the hermit, of the anchorite. The church in which this altar-piece is placed belonged to the Franciscan order, as its popular name denotes, but Franciscans and all western monks and nuns accepted S. Benedict as their Primate. The staff which he carries is a crozier which marks his high rank as abbot of Monte Cassino: but why he carries the Bible open at the apochryphal Ecclesiasticus it may not be easy to explain. There is probably a sentence or phrase in the opening passage which was identified with the preaching of S. Benedict.

Venice is great in the flesh and blood side of graphic art, but then the chances are that this is the most important side of graphic art. Poetry in words can express that sentiment which is not embodied, but painting can only show sentiment where it produces visible effects upon the muscles of

the face, the attitude of the body, at most the grouping of certain principal figures. And let the reader consider whether the extremely uncertain character of the sentiment expressed in that way, as well in the living face and body as in the painted representation of it, be not a suggestion to him that, in pictures, and most of all in permanent works in colour, beauty of form and feature, of colour and line, is the first requirement. The Venetians, at all events, thought so; and when it is not so much a question of beauty in the ordinary sense of the word, mere loveliness such as defies description or analysis, and is akin to the loveliness of the noblest works of nature—when events have to be commemorated, and dignity, expressive action, movement, all come to take the place of beauty considered by itself, then the Venetians are still the masters of the situation. Even in the earlier days when the last triumphs of colour had not become familiar things to the Venetian painters, this matter of splendid descriptive painting, giving decorative re-

sults of the very highest rank, is of almost supreme importance in their art.

The picture shown in Plate XVI records a certain event which, though of great interest to devout believers, must yet be taken as subordinate to the painted record of the Piazza di San Marco,[1] and the church itself, as they were in 1496. A church procession is crossing the Square, and the tail of it has not yet freed itself from the Porta della Carta, that gateway which leads to the great Court of the Ducal Palace. The head of the procession seems to be going out of sight under the arcades of the Procuratie Vecchie; perhaps northward through the Merceria. The white monk-like gowns and white caps are the half-religious dress of ceremony of the Brotherhood of S. John. Their semi-religious character is indicated by the votive candles which are so numerous in this part of the procession. Immediately in the middle of the foreground is a

[1] The Procession in the Piazza di San Marco: Painting on canvas, about twenty-five feet long; in the Academy of Fine Arts, Venice; the work of Gentile Bellini (1421 or 1427—d. 1507-8).

shrine carried by four men in that same white, the uniform of the Brotherhood; one should notice the heavy staves carried in the left hand which are to serve to prop up the Châsse, as by the legs of a table, whenever a halt occurs. This rich piece of goldsmith's work is assumed to contain a certain very sacred relic, still preserved in the chapel of the ancient Confraternity of S. John the Evangelist.[1] A great canopy supported by other four uniformed brothers is borne above the sacred relic. Immediately in the rear of these is seen, kneeling, that merchant Jacopo De Salis who prayed to the Holy Relic for the healing of his son. All this part of the procession is made up of these uniformed Brothers of S. John. But there come behind, the musicians, the world of officials, the Doge himself, crowned with his Cornu and sheltered by an umbrella-like canopy which can dimly be seen just at the foot of the Campanile. The Square is full of people who come and go,

[1] Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, in the island of the Rialto, northwest of the Frari Church and the Venetian Archives.

who watch the procession or saunter away from it. The historical importance of the picture demands notice, for we cannot doubt that it was exactly as here shown that San Marco appeared in 1495—San Marco and the buildings around. There have been changes since then; the Mosaics of all the lunettes in the front except that one which is farthest towards the left for the lower story, have been replaced by later work. But otherwise the church is what it was. The four flag-poles in front of it rise now from magnificent supporters of wrought bronze, which were put in place only ten years after this picture was finished. The buildings on the left, half hidden by San Marco, have been replaced by the late classic Palazzo Patriarcale, which, however, stands back, leaving more room for the little Piazza de' Leoni. Further still to the left there are shown house-fronts with pointed arches, where the clock tower (Torre del Horologio) was built almost as this picture was painted —they are contemporaries. On the right of the picture of course the great Campanile

is gone, but this picture shows that there was no Loggetta at its base (for this indeed was not built till 1540) and the dwelling-houses close to it, rich with Byzantine and with late Gothic details, stand where there has been open pavement for many years: for the great Square is perhaps a hundred feet wider at that point than it was in the fifteenth century. The Ducal Palace alone is unchanged. There is indeed a light gallery seen leading from it towards the church; and that has disappeared, leaving only some curious tradition behind. The full glory of Venetian painting was in the future. That extraordinary development of the colour sense which was characteristic of the people of Northern Italy as distinguished from the Florentines is visible in the work of the Bellini, but it must be watched in its development for thirty years more. It was to dominate the art of the Venetian state, and to exercise an influence never to be lost, over all the world of painting.

Meantime in Florence there was still to come to maturity that other skill of the

draughtsman, disregarding the glory of colour and seeking rather for skillful disposition of the body in bold and strange attitudes; attention to minute points of anatomy, even to exaggeration; expression of face, even beyond what seems good taste and the natural reserve of the artist. This is true of the two greatest men of the time; Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and Michelangelo (1475–1564). Those were days when the first intellects of the time really gave themselves to art. Building, then not separated from architecture, and including fortresses and hydraulic engineering; painting, then lending itself freely to decoration, and covering walls, within and without, and vaulted roofs as well as altar-backs; these great arts, with sculpture, which was newly filled with an inspiration from Greco-Roman antiquity, had the power to occupy and to absorb the best talent of the time. The practitioners were men of more intellect than the grand dukes and the churchmen, they were wiser, and might grow to be more experienced in life than even the great

merchants. What could have drawn a Leonardo or a Michelangelo away from the life of art?

In 1492 (a convenient date to fix and to remember), there were specializing tendencies at work. The young artist Michelangelo chose to call himself a sculptor and to live as a sculptor, avoiding pictorial work. The older artist Leonardo was a scientific investigator, before experimental science was, in despite of his other occupations. And so it is that we have only three pictures in good order, and a cartoon, by which to judge Leonardo the painter; and only one single easel-picture by Michelangelo.

Plate XVII[1] is one of those three pictures, and is in the Louvre Museum. There is a picture in the National Gallery almost exactly like it, and it is thought that each is an original, the Louvre picture being the earlier work.[2] We put it down

[1] The Holy Family, called The Virgin of the Rocks: Painting in oil on canvas, six feet seven inches high, in the Museum of the Louvre, Paris, by Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519).

[2] After comparing many recent opinions I am glad to accept, in this guarded way, the view of Mr. Edward McCurdy.

Plate XVII.—LA VIERGE AUX ROCHERS; LEONARDO DA VINCI.

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Plate XVIII.—THE HOLY FAMILY; MICHELANGELO.

for 1495, and we note the retention, in a work showing consummate power of drawing and great subtlety of painter's technique, of the most arbitrary rock-drawing, showing absolute indifference to natural fact; the most primitive study of the herbage of the foreground; and the most purely Florentine types of heads and disposition of the group. The action of the Child Jesus in blessing S. John is unusual and this, and the gentle and yet expressive faces, with that charming gesture of the Virgin's left hand, have given this the name of one of the most intensely religious of pictures.

Michelangelo was a sculptor by training and habits, who painted only occasionally and as if under protest; but he painted now and then, as every Florentine who had devoted himself to art would necessarily do when an order was given. So Michelangelo —recognized even in 1504 as a master of anatomy, of draughtsmanship, even of composition of lines and masses—was set to paint a picture of religious subject, and produced

the famous roundel in the Tribune of the Uffizi. Plate XVIII[1] shows well enough its extraordinary conception. The Virgin, seated in front, leans back with marked gesture to take the Child from S. Joseph, and although she is quietly seated, her person is so disposed that the knees project at the right of the spectator, the body turns definitely to the left, the arms are extended to the left to take the burden which they must assume. The muscles start on the upper arm and also below the elbow, as in an athlete. The head is thrown back and the face foreshortened, the attitude is beyond measure unusual and strange for a picture of figures in repose, and yet in spite of its strangeness the attitude is natural, free, simple—one which we should expect a perfectly strong and perfectly trained woman to assume. Perhaps that is the peculiarity of Michelangelo's art, then and after. It has been said often enough that he created for himself (especially in

[1] Holy Family: Painting in tempera on wood, three feet ten inches in diameter, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564).

later life) a world which is not that of ordinary humanity. His world is of men and women not like the living men and women of Florence or of Rome, and his anatomy is false in a thousand cases if compared with the standard set up for us by ordinary nature.

An early instance of this search for a new universe of living beings is to be found in the picture we are to consider—the background full of naked figures sitting or leaning on a parapet wall and having no connection whatever with the subject; unless the little S. John on the right is thought to connect those figures with the principal personages. This background would seem to many a model of bad taste, of misapplied energy, of ill-used skill. The ruddy flesh contrasting with the hills beyond, faintly made out, is not successful as a ground upon which the principal figures may be displayed. More than in any other picture which we are considering in this study is the eye of the student called away from the important centre of

the picture into the distance, and yet the distance has nothing to tell us when we concentrate our gaze upon it. But the group in front, which touches the circular boundary of the picture, is the challenge offered by this newcomer to the world of painters. Here, he seems to say, is vigorous young womanhood as it ought to be shown in painting.

The picture is the work of a man who did not consider painting as his trade and who undertook it with some reluctance; he imagined a bas-relief, and in a bas-relief those background figures would have afforded a pleasant enough bossy surface upon which to throw up the higher relief of the central group. There is no study of colour; the Virgin's robe is pink in a sense, and there is blue and green in her cloak, these hues being relieved against the sombre gray of Joseph's gown. So the flesh tints of the foreground and those of the background are discriminated in a way by the "aerial perspective" which tends to soften and render less brilliant those of the dis-

tance. There is, however, no scheme of colour whatever. It is not a work of colour in any strict sense of the word; nor is it probable that we have lost much of its original and intended scheme. The tempera process in which it is carried out does not fade badly, nor does it darken like oil-painting.

In spite of all his opposition, and it was strenuous, Michelangelo was compelled by the Pope to undertake the painting of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, that is to say, of its vaults, for its walls between the windows were already filled, as also the broad band below the windows and above the line of the tapestry. This vault begins to rise from the walls and to curve inward at a height above the floor of about forty-five feet. The chapel is fifty-nine feet six inches in height in the centre. It has been so treated by the master that the whole painted surface seems near to us, while yet the room is not distorted nor lowered in any diminishing or degrading sense. The whole modulated space of different rounded sur-

faces meeting one another at blunt angles, and covering a space at least 12,000 feet in extent if measured along the main curves of the vault, is treated as one vast canvas upon which the mightiest human intelligence which has ever devoted itself to fine art undertook to express its thoughts about Man in his relations to the Earth and to the Eternal Powers. It would not be wise to try even in the slightest degree to analyze this work, but it must be mentioned as being in a wholly exceptional fashion a union of the system of design familiar to a sculptor with the requirements of mural painting. It is in every way more of a painter's work, or at least more nearly a painter's work, than the single "easel picture" which has just been described. The colour, even, is attractive, not glowing and rich, not melting and delicate, but manly, simple, high in tone as a fresco must be (in spite of the blackening effects of time and smoke) and delightful to the student in a fashion quite unexpected. The lover of painting in its truest sense—that is, as an organized display of the col-

oured look of things, comes to the chapel for the first time in the expectation of finding a gloomy and gray work, and is surprised by its variety and its charm. To say that it is the greatest painting in the world is to say too much, for Michelangelo was not and could not be a painter in the sense that Paul Veronese was a painter, or Velasquez or Correggio; but as the greatest intellectual feat ever achieved by a painting workman it may be accepted, and must be studied by every one who wishes to know all that painting may be.

Michelangelo had been brought by the Pope from Florence in 1505; Raphael[1] was brought from Urbino in the very same year; all by the determination and bold initiative of Julius II. The Urbinate painter was destined to live only into his thirty-seventh year, but to crowd into that short life a surprising amount of masterly work. More than other men he had the power of bringing many artists almost his

[1] Raffaele Santi, or Sanzio, called also Raffaello and in the Latinized form, Raphael (1483–1520).

equals to work in his way, to see with his eyes, to paint with a manipulation nearly like his own, and to produce "Raphaels" with but few touches of the master's own hand. This gift, a rare one, and one obviously capable of abuse, was added to faculties more common among the Italians of that time—the faculty of artistic vision, the faculty of dexterous and easy drawing of what was seen, the faculty of manipulating pigments in such a way that whether in monochrome or in what passed for colour their painted work was tranquil, serene, sufficient, satisfactory to the community around them—a community already well informed and full of keen vision. There was still something else in Raphael—a peculiar quality of his mind which enabled him to give a peaceful repose to subjects not always thought capable of receiving such treatment, and of bestowing exceptional grace upon subjects which had not been always treated gracefully. Thus the vaster problems of the painter's art, the mural decoration of wall and vault, were treated

with a harmony and gentle tranquillity not before seen, although on a great scale and with figures larger than life; and in like manner the Madonna and Child received a new simplicity, in which simplicity was found a charm heretofore unknown.

The Madonnas and those paintings of the halls in the Vatican which were completed before 1511, and before the employment of assistants had been carried to excess, —those are the two sides of Raphael's art which we must consider. In 1509, in his twenty-sixth year, Raphael began to paint in the Vatican. Before that time he had painted the Madonna del Gran' Duca (see Plate XIX), the Madonna di Casa Tempi, now at Munich, the Madonna Ansidei and the S. Catherine of Alexandria in the National Gallery, and other portable pictures of great importance, especially the Madonna now in the Hermitage Museum at St. Petersburg. This contains two figures of saints in addition to the enthroned Madonna holding the Child. What is noticed in these pictures is the realism with which

Raphael treated the simple problem of painting a mother and child in such a way that they should be lovely without losing wholly their character as religious emblems. The Madonna di Casa Tempi is rather celebrated as giving the simply realistic view of the case; the Child is held up close to the Mother's breast and cheek, and looks out of the picture, though not towards the spectator, with the unquestioning eyes of infancy. The Madonna di Terranuova (in the Berlin Museum) is a complete contrast to this, and has even been ascribed to an earlier time than 1504 because of its somewhat archaic treatment. An angel is introduced, to balance the Infant S. John, who holds a scroll which the Divine Child also supports. The Cowper Madonna of 1505 (in private possession and known to most persons only by its photograph), is as realistic as the Madonna di Casa Tempi, and yet the turning outward of the eyes of both Mother and Child is a step towards the assumption of a sacred character, as if the two divine personages were assuming their place

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Plate XIX.—THE MADONNA DEL GRAN' DUCA; RAPHAEL.

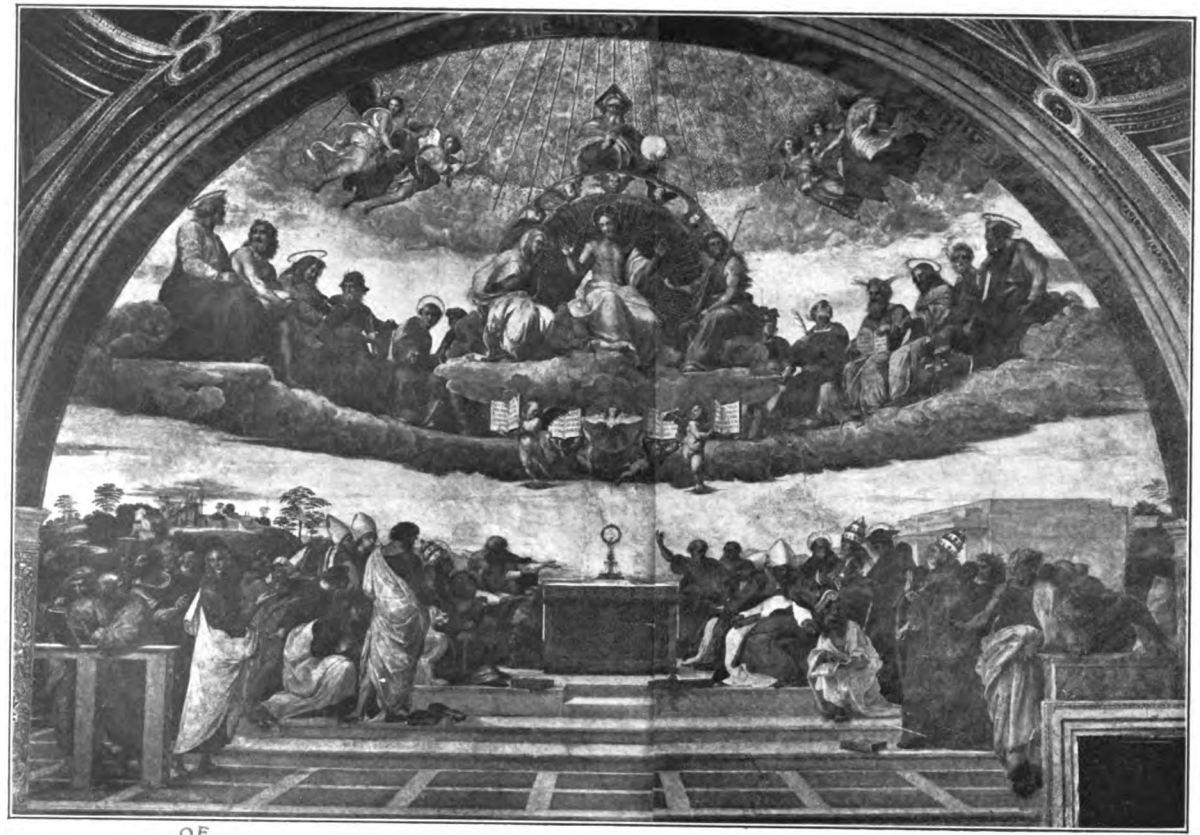

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Plate XX.—LA DISPUTÀ DEL SACRAMENTO; RAPHAEL.

as teachers and as a sacrifice for the world. The beautiful Madonna at Chantilly continues this tendency, for the Child looks at the spectator, without, perhaps, the fixity of the later pictures, but with intention, as it were. The Madonna in the Vienna Museum, who sits in a landscape of developed character, not other than a carefully designed natural background, the most purely thought out piece of landscape painting ever conceived by Raphael, is a votive picture pure and simple. The Child and S. John play with the cross in the foreground, the Mother sitting above them, dominating the group. Very similar is the Madonna of the Goldfinch in the Uffizi Gallery. There are also pictures of the Holy Family in which more personages than two, or even than the three, are represented, and of these is the famous picture of the Louvre called by the name of King Francis I. The culmination of Raphael's expressional art is to be found in the Madonna di San Sisto of the Dresden Gallery, a picture which, though full of what seem to many persons serious faults in taste

and judgment, carries its message to every one, and is immortal beyond the immortality of most works of man. In that picture the Virgin stands high on a globe wreathed in clouds, the Child is carried on one hand and is supported by the other; the Child represented as larger than so young a baby would be and with its face full of an earnest, thoughtful and even solemn meaning. The Mother looks more calmly but still seriously towards the spectator, but the Child is, as it were, the Saviour of mankind looking out upon the world which he has come to save. The extremely full drapery, robe and veil, of the Madonna is wholly in keeping with her ideal character as here given. She is priestess as well as mother, presiding saint as well as guardian of the Infant Saviour. But the filling of the canvas in all its corners with the excessively voluminous robes of S. Sixtus himself and of S. Barbara, to which is added the astonishing curtains which fill the top of the picture on either side, is so disagreeable to the student of religious art that only the supe-

rior colour quality of this canvas over most of Raphael's, can help such a student to the proper mood of mind in which to accept this great and famous painting.

Let us accept the rather for our illustration here, the Madonna del Gran' Duca, (Plate XIX)[1] painted in 1504, as all the authorities agree, by his own hand throughout. It has been cleaned, however, in rather too severe a fashion: no repainting can be discovered. It is easy to object to the swollen cheek of the Child, but that exception taken, this is a perfectly representative picture. A country woman of the neighbourhood of Florence, of unusual regularity of feature but not otherwise charming beyond her time and her surroundings, holds her child naturally and simply. That is all; and the painting, though masterly and complete, is not of such exceptional charm as to lift the picture at once into the highest sphere of art. It is a work of light and shade, a work of "values" rather than

[1] Madonna and Child, called Madonna del Gran' Duca: Painting on wood, about three feet high; in the gallery of the Pitti Palace, Florence; see former footnote.

of colour, and indeed a somewhat Rembrandtesque effect seems to be attained in the glow of the features of Mother and Child, produced by contrast with the dark olive-green background.

When Raphael went to Rome he was at once set to work in the rooms of the Vatican above the Borgia apartments, and his first picture was painted on the western wall of the hall in which were given the signatures, or seals, the final authentication of pontifical decrees. This painting fills the lunette, properly so called, and also the wall beneath it down to the top of the high dado, though a door seen on the extreme right cuts into it. It fills the whole wall of the room, perhaps twenty-seven feet wide from corner to corner, and immediately opposite is another picture as large as itself; the famous School of Athens. The first one, however, called La Disputà del Sacramento (Plate XX)[1] or the Argument

[1] The Mystery of the Eucharist called the Disputà, or Discussion of the Sacrament: Fresco on the wall of the room called Camera della Segnatura in the Vatican at Rome; the work of Raffaelle Santi; see former footnote.

about the Host, is not intended, of course, to represent any incident, or even any imaginary discussion or debate. The subject of the picture is simply the triumph of Christianity and the mystical character of that religion. The Host on the altar, in an elaborate monstrance, fixes the attention of the human personages below, not one of whom, or only one, turns his eyes heavenward, while one points to heaven as if saying that Truth is to be found there. Popes and bishops, men of the early church in that semi-classical costume which the Italians had invented for them, as is shown in the discussion of the Masaccio picture (Plate VI), and the Ghirlandaio picture (Plate XII) have all met to do homage and to encourage one another in the faith, and among them is seen the laureled head of Dante, the only wholly recognizable portrait of the two groups, although nearly every figure here has its name affixed to it by students of painting. A suggestion of landscape forms the background with, on the left, a structure going

up with its scaffolding just in place, and on the other side a great square firm-set house of masonry, no doubt as symbolical as the unfinished building opposite. Above the whole human world floats a firmament of cloud upon which is seated Jesus with hands raised to show the stigmata, while the Madonna is made to entreat Him and the Baptist to point to Him, in the approved ecclesiological fashion. Twelve personages, not the apostles, but selected saints of the church including two, at least, among the Old Testament worthies, are arranged on this cloudy floor, which is drawn in perspective so that the lunette is made to have the appearance of a semi-dome. The dove below Christ, the Father above, holding the globe, are, so far as the composition goes, subordinate to the figure of the Redeemer. Above this again, this belt of heavenly judgment and truth, is seen the belt of heavenly peace and glory, in which, indeed, the figure of the Father is included. Rays, as of light, and a background below of burnished gold upon which the flying

and fluttering angels are painted, increase the resemblance to those early devotional pictures of which indeed, this may be taken as the last crowning effort. It is, I suppose, the noblest of Raphael's works, and it is so because it expresses to the full his position and his power. He was a perfect embodiment of so much of the Italian Risorgimento as expressed the ecclesiastical, the peculiarly Christian, habit of mind of the Italian. There was a Pagan, or at least a classical Roman, and therefore non-Christian side to the Renaissance, but with this Raphael's painting has little to do. He was not inclined, like his contemporaries in the north, to paint earthly triumphs; perhaps his close connection with the Papacy would have prevented him from giving this mundane direction to his art; but it remains true that without being a specially religious painter, he painted always ecclesiastical subjects—these and portraits of the celebrated people of his time.

If, then, Raphael's work was identified with the church, and with such presenta-

tion of the Christian belief as the time and the community would accept, why is it that the English reformers of 1850 and thereabout chose his name as expressing in one word the evil which they would have remedied? This subject must be treated rather fully in Chapter IX; but it may be said here that Raphael's highly architectonic composition, the severe and formal ordonnance of his frescoes, excluding all possibility of showing things as they really are—events as they really happened—was the chief cause. The Conflagration in the Suburb (Incendio del Borgo) in the hall next to the Stanza della Segnatura, where little flames burst out and flicker among marble columns and walls, where nothing is seen to burn, and where there is no smoke nor lurid glow of fire, but only women bringing water in lovely Greek vases with small necks and spouts; the whole picture confessedly a miracle of the church used as an excuse for the skillful drawing of nude and nearly nude figures: the Miraculous Draught of Fishes with the famous over-

laden boat, a study as academic as the last-named, but of figures in long robes: and, without seeking such extreme instances, the pictures in this very Stanza della Segnatura, where dignified persons sit about in graceful postures, while engaged in nothing—this tendency towards unreality is what fixed the turning point for the reformers at Raphael's brief epoch of production. Personified vices and virtues, studies and beliefs; deities of Greco-Roman mythology; imagined portraits of famous men of old time; groups typifying events but not relating them; symbol and metaphor, forming an apparent subject for purely monumental paintings—that is what the nineteenth century protestors had in mind. In the United States there has been, since 1880, a great deal of mural painting done on just those same lines. Industry, Philosophy and Art; Poetry, Philosophy and Science; Painting and Sculpture; Geography and Astronomy; Government and Anarchy; Justice, Mercy and Truth;—large paintings showing

groups of figures draped in a classical way, and assumed to stand for those qualities and tendencies, have been lavished upon American public buildings. Well, that is just what the modern world has learned of Raphael—how to do all this rather unmeaning kind of work in a graceful and attractive way; and it is just that lesson which the English reformers tried to have the world forget.

That Raphael remains the most generally accepted of painters, among artists and for the world at large, seems to show how very little the Narrative, the Relation, the Telling of the Story have to do with serious appreciation of a picture. We have to consider Raphael's frescoes as monumental compositions, with only such obvious symbolic meaning as the modern world enjoys; as works of light and shade, as colour-studies in a limited sense, as capable of giving purely artistic pleasure, and causing admiration and awe in beholders. It is in these respects that we are compelled to compare him with the greatest masters

of graphic art; for the present age is at its best in matters of critical enquiry, and no great reputation passes unquestioned. One excellent critic, Sir Walter Armstrong, in his book on Gainsborough, says plainly that "the world" has begun to rank certain painters before Raphael: and he names Leonardo, Michelangelo, Rembrandt and Titian, and suggests also Velasquez. To these Correggio would be added by some, Tintoretto by other students of painting; I do not insist upon my own preferences, as they are visible enough in these pages.

The continual painting of Madonnas and Holy Families, whenever he was free from his great and difficult mural work, showed Raphael's own willingness to cling to the successful, the admired, forms of art. No man understood better than he how to give such variety as was needed to give individuality. Each picture has a name, and the name when spoken at once calls up the picture itself to those who have seen it or who have studied a reproduction. And yet of these forty Madonnas, it cannot be

said that the difference between them goes farther than a slight rearrangement of the two principal figures, a slight modification of the background. There is nowhere a more cogent instance of the truth, that originality is not in the choice of subject nor in the choice of a new form in which to present that subject. Originality lies in the thoughts that arise as the artist works, and in his way of using his artistic language to express those thoughts. In poetry, those thoughts are subtile modifications of the main theme. Byron has to say, merely, that his loved one is dead; and he writes:

I will not ask where thou liest low
  Nor gaze upon the spot,
There flowers or weeds at will may grow
  So I regard them not.
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved and long shall love
  Like common earth can rot.
For me it needs no stone to tell
'Tis nothing, that I loved so well.

There is the commonplace subject, the world-old subject, dressed with the thoughts that arose in the artist's mind as he worked;

and seven of these long stanzas follow, without introducing any subject other than this. Thus simple and obvious in meaning, the poem is yet of absorbing interest. And yet Byron is not the poet of "thought" in the sense of high intellectuality; he is the poet of swift and burning impression, of passionate sensation. He is the writer of whom Goethe said: "When he reflects, he is a child."[1] In like manner the originality of any one of Raphael's Madonnas is to be sought in the thought which took shape in his mind and was embodied in the swiftly drawn outlines and detailed expression of the masses and in that which followed, brush work on the canvas. If we look at the easily accessible half-tone prints[2] and compare ten of them representing ten of the famous Madonnas, we shall note that there is no force of genius required to pose a pretty country-woman in

[1] Sobald er reflectirt, ist er ein Kind. Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens, von Johann Peter Eckermann: the conversation dated 18 January, 1825.

[2] As for instance the collection by Karl Karoly, "Raphael's Madonnas and other Great Pictures"; or a volume of the series "Klassiker der Kunst in Gesamtsausgaben."

an attitude such as suggests itself naturally, and to bid her hold a naked child in this way or in that, or to kneel beside it in this or that gentle attitude. The artist's thoughts which excite our respect, and which have excited the admiration of Europe during four centuries, are those by force of which the head and neck are so posed and painted as to show lovely gradations of chiaroscuro; the face, the neck and the arms so conventionalized that they have an abstract refinement beyond that of life; the figures, if there are several, so placed and so posed with relation to one another that the lovely curves of one mass are prolonged into another, and echoed and emphasized by others again. Thoughts that are not those of the writer or the orator are not wholly expressible in words. Therefore, a verbal description of such thoughts seems poor and unimpressive—"Is that all?" the reader of such a passage will ask, and the answer must be, That is all! but be sure that you understand the full force of those poor words.

Now consider this subject in connection with another, and a very different artist. Take Correggio's Marriage of S. Catherine, a picture painted about ten years later than either of the Raphaels which have been specially named above. In this picture, shown in Plate XXI,[1] the charm is at once recognized as different from that of a Raphael. The features are less classical, less conventionally charming, more individual: the expression of delight, which befits a picture destined to be a marriage-gift, is more unrestrained: the attitudes are more free and realistic: the background is modern-looking, with trees as they really grow and a distance expressive of a wilder nature than the serene gardens in which Raphael delighted. The movement and incident of the picture are increased by the figures in the background, those which enact the martyrdom of the two saints who take part in the mystic ceremony,

[1] The mystic marriage of S. Catherine of Alexandria: Painting in oil; forty-two inches high. In the Salon Carré of the Louvre Museum. The picture seems to have been painted in 1519. By Antonio Allegri, called Correggio (1494–1534).

Catherine and Sebastian. In spite of all these differences the monochrome reproduction of this picture is not so very unlike a similar copy of a Raphael group of four figures. The difference between the paintings is, however, radical. When the catalogues tell you that in the Raphael the Virgin wears a pink (or crimson) robe and a blue cloak; S. Joseph a blue tunic and a yellow cloak: and when to that we compare the statement that the Virgin of Correggio wears a red robe and a blue mantle, we must take those names of hues as indicative merely. Nor does this inadequacy of the term "blue" come merely from the difference there is between a cool blue and a hot one, a dark blue and a light one, a soft blue and a harsh one; it comes from this, chiefly—that the blueness of any one surface, robe or cloak, is quite infinitely varied by unceasing gradations. These gradations are not in darkness and lightness merely. The artist does not take his "blue" and mix black with it, nor pass black over it to make it darker—nor yet

Plate XXI.—THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE OF S. CATHERINE; CORREGGIO.

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Plate XXII.—THE GREAT FORTUNE; ALBERT DÜRER.

put white into it to make it lighter. That may be done, indeed, but it is only one modification among a thousand. The blue is warmer in one place and cooler in another: it is more purely blue in one case and much modified (you cannot say how much) towards greenness in another, towards purpleness in a third, towards a dull grayness in a fourth, and in a fifth towards a whitish paleness like that of the clear sky near the horizon. And yet the whole garment remains blue, in effect. From one to another of these colour effects the gradation is unseizable—not to be intimated or described; and it is upon these "gradations" that the charm of the colourist depends. Now, the loveliness of these gradations and the resulting glory of colour is vastly greater in the Correggio than in the Raphael: and of this and similar differences there is discussion below in connection with the still greater glory of the Venetian colouring.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EPOCH OF SPLENDOUR

To find the strong contrasts of that time of change and growth let us turn from Italy to the North. Plate XXII[1] is Albert Dürer's wonderful engraving which is called the Great Fortune—Fortune because "her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls, and rolls, and rolls;" and Great because there is a smaller engraving of nearly the same subject. But her covered wine cup is assumed by some to express Temperance, and that idea of the picture's meaning is confirmed by the bridle which is held in her left hand. What Dürer had in mind when he made this surprising design we shall never know; but it appears that the country and the village which are seen below that cloud whereon

[1] Print from an engraving on metal, twelve inches high. Designed and engraved by Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg (1471–1528).

the goddess seems to rest is the village of Eytas in Hungary, whence came the father of the artist. That it should or should not be a portrait of the little-known village of German character and of mediæval rusticity is unimportant to us; but that it should be, in Dürer's mind, the faithful likeness of some little town which he knew well, with its two small fortresses on the hill to the right, its rough little wooden bridges, its clusters and clumps of trees and its group of houses, not more than twenty-five in all, huddled around their little church, all that is of importance as contrasting so decidedly with the entirely unreal character of the landscape in the picture by Filippino (Plate IX). The extreme interest which these pictures of uncertain significance have for every loving and patient student of art, is reason enough why they should be presented in this connection. We should be only half instructed in the lofty enjoyment given by pictures, if we contented ourselves with studying the easily explained, the obvious, among them.

It is especially curious to compare Raphael's painting with that of Holbein, another great contemporary, for in the directness and straightforward story-telling of the German there is a more unmingled religious zeal than is to be found in the subtle grace of Raphael. Thus, in the Meier Madonna (Plate XXIII),[1] the harder and more peasant-like north-country faces, especially that of the Burgomaster Meier on the left, are a disturbing element to one who recalls the heads designed by Botticelli, Ghirlandaio and Raphael, but if facial expression is of any significance at all in painting, that of the German is more concentrated, more unconscious—in short more devout—than that of the Italians.

Holbein is, moreover, a greater colourist than Raphael, with noble gradations of hue.

[1] The Madonna and Child with family of the donor (1526): Painting in oil on wood, four feet eight inches high, in the Royal Gallery at Dresden. By Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543). The replica of this picture in the Darmstadt Gallery is perhaps the finer of the two, but probably each is an original. In Plate XXIII the ornamental spandrils of the frame have been painted out in the photograph: an unfortunate disfigurement, but not making the picture less fit for this inquiry.

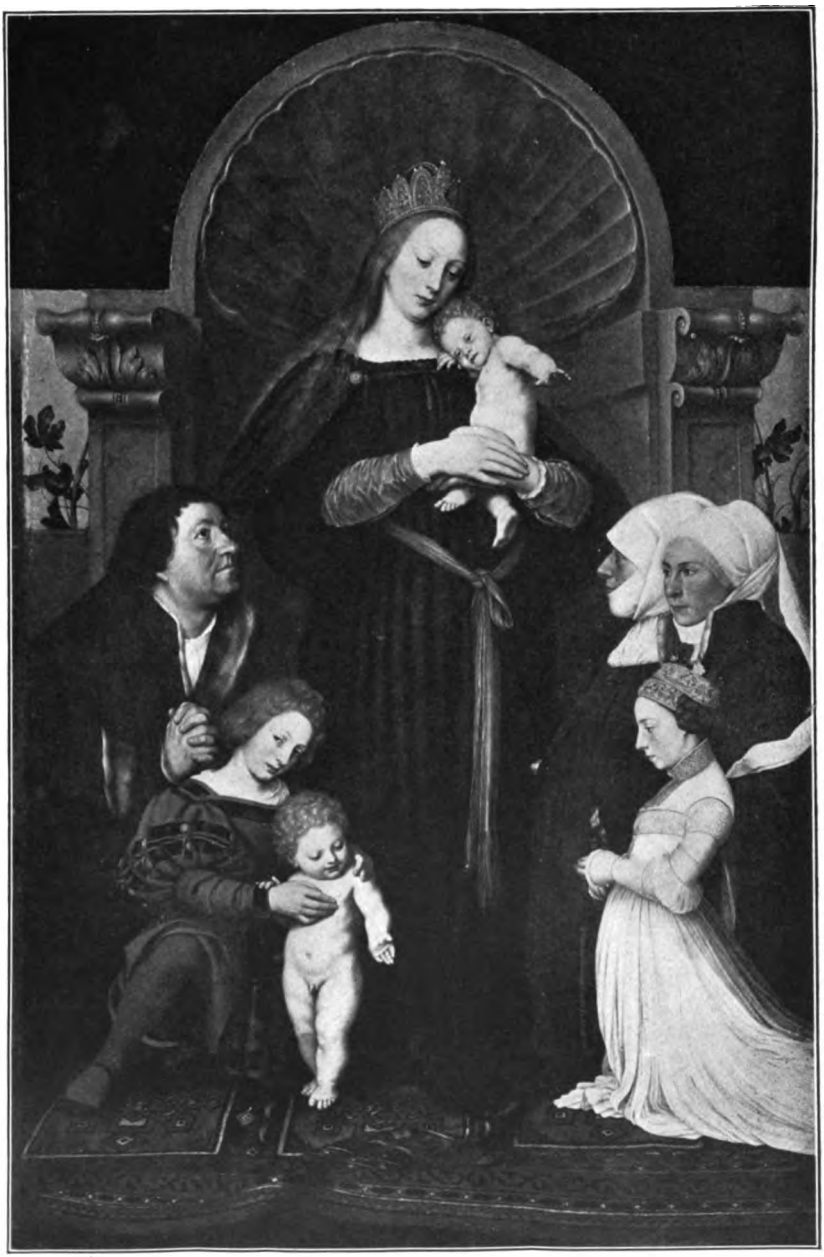

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Plate XXIII.—THE MEIER MADONNA; HOLBEIN.

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Plate XXIV.—THE AMBASSADORS; HOLBEIN.

Thus, in the admirable picture called The Ambassadors, now in the London National Gallery, and which is reproduced in Plate XXIV,[1] there is a general character as of a complex mosaic of hues, very perfectly harmonized. Very few of Raphael's works show any disposition to produce such effects.

The painter has to choose which he will achieve between two principal objects of study and thought—between dignity of effect produced by admirable drawing and highly wrought light and shade, and splendour of effect produced by elaborate and still refined colouring. The Florentines made their choice early and adhered to it throughout. The Florentines cared for dignity, for expressiveness of face; they sought with constantly increasing zeal for knowledge of the human form as it may be represented in line and tint. Their work began

[1] Portraits of two gentlemen; in oil on wood; six feet nine inches high, dated 1533. The work of Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543). The strange object floating above the floor is a projection of a human skull, as if an image thrown from a concave mirror. The picture belonged to the Earl of Radnor, and was kept in Longford Castle, Wiltshire, but was sold to the British government in 1890.

and continued cold, in a way. Fresco painting, with its paleness, its tendency to broad, general effects, was their natural method. More than any other process it helped them in their conceptions of a somewhat severe and frigid dignity, for it allows of no depth of colour and no minuteness of detail; its surface is hard and not lustrous. It is the ideal method of work for painters who are concerned with the typical and the universal, and with the abstract and severe treatment of human form; who are minded to ignore the actual coloured look of objects about them, and turn to what was assumed to be their inward verity.

The tendency of the North Italians, Lombards and Venetians, had always been more realistic and less severe, and when it was discovered that the manipulation of pigment upon wood and canvas was capable of giving a more splendid chromatic effect than could be given by any decorative appliance whatsoever, by embroidery, by enamel, by painted carvings, by inlay of any sort, by mosaic even in the most highly

wrought wall surfaces of Venice, and even of glass in the windows of the churches—then the way was open for the great colour schools of Parma and of Venice. When and by whom this discovery was made can only be inferred. It was natural that it should be made by artists who, as Mr. Berenson has said, "Were in reality painting handsome, healthy, sane people like themselves," although still pretending to paint ecclesiastical subjects. Another consideration may have helped in the Venetian part of this development of painting—the extraordinary beauty of Venice herself, of her outside—of her face as her people saw it from the gliding boats on the surface of the Great Canal and of the anchorage place outside—the Canal of San Marco. It is Ruskin who has said somewhere that it was a wise thought to make the streets of Venice "so rich in external ornament, because there is no couch of rest like a gondola." This he says in connection with a very well reasoned argument against decorating the fronts of shops and business buildings, railway stations and fac-

tories. You do not need decoration when you have no leisure to look at it, and you vulgarize it by forcing it upon the notice of busy people. And so the Venetians did not decorate their arsenal, or only its gateway; but they built the outsides of their dwelling houses with a free use of colour such as no other town of which we have any record could show, but of which traces only remained in 1860, while much more extensive vestiges were, and still are, in cities of the Venetian mainland. But in Venice there was an external use of colour of which we have now no absolute knowledge—namely, the actual painting with the artist's brush of great figure subjects in full colour, and not, as in Vicenza and Padua, patterns only, on the exterior surfaces of walls. In the statelier days of the Renaissance, disks and bands of rich marble, with delicate framing of white marble, were built into the facing of house walls; but in this the fifteenth century architects were only following the example set by the men who built the twelfth century round-arched house-

fronts, and who encrusted San Marco with Greek marble. The Venetians of Murano, those men of whom Luigi Vivarini is the best type (see Plate XIV) show even in the fifteenth century the tendency towards this beauty of the external surface of things; and the great Giovanni Bellini, for all his really sacred cast of mind, his almost Florentine religiosity, is a colourist too—and would be thought a colourist of the highest rank anywhere outside of the Venetian company.

But it is the wonderful and mysterious personality which we know under the name of Giorgione[1] which for us marks the beginning of the great colourist school. He died young, and only three pictures are accepted as positively his own; moreover of these one at least is in a remote town, Castel Franco, in the mountain country north of the lagoons; another is in a private collection at Venice; and one only is easily accessible, namely, the least known of all, the Æneas, Evander and Pallas, as

[1] Giorgio of Castel Franco (1477 or 1478—about 1510) called Giorgio Barbarelli by writers who have assumed that he was connected with a great family of that name.

we now call the picture in the Gallery at Vienna. The other pictures ascribed to this artist by different writers at different times are more easy to characterize under the names of such men as Titian, who, passing long and fully occupied lives, concentrating in their own hands so much of the artistic life of the time, are found to have struck every note, to have rung every chord, to have covered the field of art and to have included within their scope the work of the men of smaller achievements. The students of Titian's art are ready enough to accept the proposition, when it is made, that Titian would not have been what he was were it not for Giorgione. It was so in the time of Turner and his friend and contemporary, Girtin, who died and left Turner to go on with the work. But inasmuch as recent and very careful writers hold that Giorgione was born at least twelve years earlier than Titian, while they accept the tradition of the two men having worked much together, so it is accepted as a probability that there is very much of Giorgione

in the earlier works of the more famous master.

Turning, then, to Titian, let us take that magnificent picture, rightly enough called the greatest of the votive pictures of Europe, the Madonna di Ca' Pesaro (Plate XXV).[1] The subject is as simple as in any other painting of similar title; except that in Venice the custom of representing the donors was carried even further and lingered longer than elsewhere. The patrician families, keeping the pope at a distance very carefully and prepared to fight for the control of their own ecclesiastical affairs, were still ready enough to express their perfect submission to the dictates and the traditions of Christianity. Accordingly, in the picture before us, although the Madonna occupies but a small part of the canvas, and although the sacred group, including S. Peter with his open book and S. Francis at the Madon-

[1] The Virgin and Child and the members of the Pesaro family: Painting in oil on canvas (1519) about fifteen feet high (figures life-size). Now as always in the Church of the Frari, Venice: by Tiziano Vecellio, called Titian (1477 or according to recent researches 1489–1576).

na's side, is still but one third of the picture, yet it is placed high, it forms the centre of the composition, the warm light falls upon the persons of this group, and the only objects which can take the eye from the heads of the saints are the boy angels in the arched top of the painting, supporting the cross, and through its unexpectedness the vast banner emblazoned with the arms of the Pesaro family impaled with those of Borgia. Now, the flag, in spite of its tender colour and the elaborate painting of embroidery and gold, can never really engage the attention to the injury of the personages. It is so with the magnificently dressed noblemen who kneel at the foot of the picture; it is so with the fully armed soldier who carries the standard and who holds as his prisoner a turbaned Turk. The masterly painting of the heads carries it over an equally skillful treatment of figured brocade and of burnished steel.

And Titian is rather prone to trust to his power of strong characterization, his unsurpassed—perhaps unrivalled—mastery over

Plate XXV.—LA MADONNA DI CA' PESARO; TITIAN.

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Plate XXVI.—THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN; TINTORETTO.

the human head considered as a medium of artistic expression. This, aided by the charm of faultless and most interesting painting, suffices to keep his pictures first in any company in which they find themselves. He does not worry himself much to secure striking groups or startling incidents. A picture of a few years later is the famous Presentation in the Temple, in the Academy of Venice. In this picture Titian has painted the incident in a simple and obvious way, showing the little girl going up the temple steps, which are drawn from one side of the *perron* and from below, while the high priest waits above to receive her; and showing, too, the surprise felt by all the spectators at the gracious freedom of the child. The spectators are put in without any very careful grouping, and the whole is made splendid merely by the architecture of the background, the really charming piece of free classicism contrasted with the familiar colour patterns in wall construction, which are identified by us all with Venice through the example set in the wall

of the Ducal Palace. The picture has suffered; the heads no longer keep their full charm and the glow of colour is marred; nothing is left intact but the noticeably unassuming make up of the picture, as if by a primitive of the fifteenth century. And the student may well contrast with that simple piece of drawing, the composition shown in Plate XXVI,[1] in which Tintoretto, Titian's contemporary, has treated the same subject of the Presentation of the Virgin. The great sweep of steps rounding away horizontally, and rising in a conical mass, is made almost to fill the picture, and because it is so prominent the "risers" of the steps are adorned with sculpture in a very graceful fashion. Then the child, Mary, is seen mounting the steps by herself, relieved against the sky, the pale light of her aureole softened by the luminosity of this background. Along the steps there are sitting

[1] The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, in oil on canvas, fifteen feet long, forming once the front of the great organ in the church of the Madonna dell' Orto, Venice, and still in that church. Painted about 1550 by Jacopo Robusti, called The Little Dyer (Tintoretto) from his first apprenticeship.

old men and young, and a woman, even as the models used to sit on the Spanish Stairway at Rome, though to these of Tintoret's an oriental look has been given by their dress and by their very deficiency in dress. Other women with their girl-children are on the steps too, mounting slowly or resting before continuing their arduous journey upward. It is insisted on as a journey of some magnitude—as a formidable task; for see how Tintoret puts into his foreground a little girl who needs and is receiving encouragement by the Virgin's example, and how a couple have given up entirely and are seated and at rest; while the presence of the idlers marks the occasion as a ceremony to be watched as you watch a procession. The composition is as elaborate as Titian's is simple; the figures are drawn with much more pretension—much more deliberate purpose of significance in their movements and attitudes, the movements are immeasurably more thought out, more carefully conceived, and more vigorously expressed; and the picture is so far from

being deficient in other respects that it remains one of the most impressive works of art even of Venice. You go to see it in its far-away church, expecting much from what you have heard, and you receive from it at least the most powerful impression possible of masterly design. In the monochrome reproduction the Tintoretto is seen to be a powerful picture; but the ceaseless striving of that great artist to secure perfect light and shade, to match the Roman school on its own ground, has led in this, as in certain other cases, to a sombre gravity of aspect less pleasing to a lover of colour than the glow of Titian or of Giorgione. Those men adopted, willingly, a kind of warm twilight for the general tone of their pictures, feeling that the strong daylight with contrasts of light and dark and with special attention given to "values" would inevitably prevent their pictures from having that magnificence which they had determined for them. Indeed, Tintoretto's main characteristic as an artist is in his realistic grasp of his subject, and included

in this his headlong energy. Thus, in a painting which we cannot possibly represent here, nor even describe, so vast is it and so complex, the Crucifixion[1] is seen as it would have seemed to a spectator—to a person who was curious about Roman forms of punishment. The cross of one of the two thieves is being raised by perfectly natural, every-day methods, the criminal being already lashed to it. Three men put their weight and strength upon the butt, two others lift it by the cross arm, and a sixth workman pulls on a guy, while the corresponding guy from the other end of the arm is held by one of the three who is for the moment occupied in supporting the main trunk of the cross. The cross of Christ is already in place, a ladder is set up behind, and a man upon it is fixing to a pole a sponge held in a basin by another attendant. The scene is full of active movement and those persons not actually engaged in the work of execution nor yet

[1] In the Scuola di San Rocco, nearly filling a wall about forty-three feet long, in the room called the Albergo. It is dated 1565.

worshipping and weeping at the foot of the cross of Christ, are looking on, curious and interested, many of them mounted, one of them in full armour as if the Centurion directing this military execution. It is hard to mention another instance in art, previous to the nineteenth century, of so complete a realization of any Biblical theme; and it is the more remarkable because of the terrible nature of the scene; but indeed it is Tintoretto's peculiar characteristic—this realization of the event which he tried to represent. Not realism exactly; it is not the search for an every-day possibility and the seeking of artistic thoughts therein: Tintoretto is as willing as any classical purist to select the grandiose events, the stately scenes; but he loves to use his powerful imagination to reproduce scenes and events as they must have been in reality. Moreover he loves the human form in decided and vigorous action as much as did Michelangelo, with the difference that the Venetian's sense of what humanity really was is uppermost, his en-

joyment of every-day life is constantly with him.

It is not a scene likely to be chosen by a realistic painter, the famous "Mercury and the Graces" of the Ducal Palace, the picture which is shown in Plate XXVII.[1] The colouring is Venetian, while yet the chiaroscuro would be that of the southern schools if it could. These distinctions are largely a matter of the artist's sight, of his mental vision. How does the artist see before him the picture which he undertakes? Titian might have seen this one, indeed, with a mountain landscape behind it which would give him less clear brilliancy of distance, and he would have relieved upon it the flesh of his nude figures in a warm and glowing harmony as unlike common life as is possible, and with a comparative indifference to light and shade. Tintoretto delights

[1] Mercury and the Three Graces, in oil on canvas, five feet six inches long. One of four pictures of uniform size by this artist, in the Anti-Collegio. They are framed in the wall just above a high dado, and the picture, Plate XXVII, is on your left as you pass through to the hall called the Sala delle Quatro Porte, going southward towards the golden staircase. By Jacopo Robusti: see previous footnote.

in light and shade; he desires even to cast shadows when he may. Look at the strong shadows that fall on the shoulder and side of the midmost figure: and note that even these cast shadows are hardly stronger than the shaded parts (that is, the parts turned away from the light) in this and the other figures. Titian would not have cared for such an effect as that. To get this and such effects as this, however, Tintoretto would even lose something of the full splendour of Venetian coloration. It is only, perhaps, in the work of the great master whom we have next to name, that colour, light and shade, and abstract form are combined with unfailing harmony.

The artist whom we have now to think of is that Paolo Caliari, who came of a Veronese family, and even of an artistical ancestry in that lovely city on the Adige. The ineffable charm of Verona, to those who love architectural art in its most refined conditions, must have availed to influence every artist growing up within its walls, but the conditions of the sixteenth

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Plate XXVII.—MERCURY AND THE GRACES; TINTORETTO.

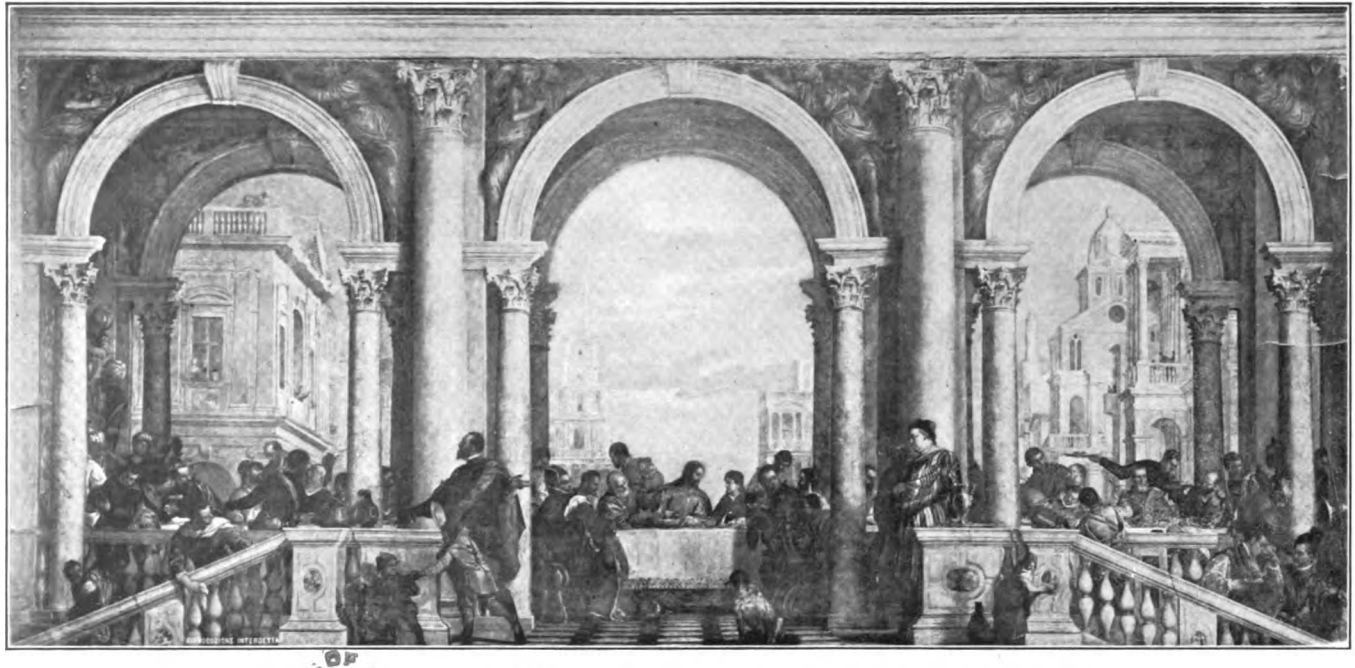

Plate XXVIII.—THE FEAST AT THE HOUSE OF LEVI; PAUL VERONESE.

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century hardly allowed a great school of painters to grow up there. They were called away. Greater and mightier communities invited their presence and required their services. Especially the regal city herself, Venice, the capital of all Venetia at that time, drew away from her more dependent communities what talent there was available. Accordingly Paolo, called always Veronese, went to the city of the lagoons. He was in Venice and at work before he was twenty-seven years old, and some of his greatest achievements were of 1560 and the years more immediately following, before he had reached the age of forty. Still, however, he lived to sixty, working all the time, and the characteristic of his painting which is to be recognized in his early days in Venice, continues almost unaltered to the end, or grows even more significant and important. He was able, by means of what must have been an almost superhuman labour directed with almost inconceivable vigour towards a single aim, to produce absolutely normal paintings, perfectly balanced between light

and shade and colour, between dignity of form and realistic action, between splendour and simple charm.

It is assumed by the analysts that Paolo painted his whole picture in *middle tint*, that is, without high lights or deep shade, that all this was done in solid opaque colour, making a kind of pale and dim picture, and that when this was complete, the stronger lights and darks were painted upon that surface. To proceed in this way required a great intellectual grasp, and a faultless knowledge of effect. The painter had to see in his mind his whole picture, with its lights and darks, all complete: for he could not decide, otherwise, upon his middle tints with all their subtile gradations of colour. He could not otherwise put in one single passage as it had to remain. Every touch in a picture involves every other: every tone, every hue, implies a whole gamut of tones and hues, up and down the scale. But again, this Paolo of Verona was a lover of colouring, and the search for exquisite combinations of colour increases the com-

plication and difficulty of the task. You can take, in water-colour work, a wet wash of crimson, lead it off to whiteness, and, while it is still wet, break blue and brown into it with little brushfuls, which you watch rather anxiously to see how they will come out: and in so doing you may get something very pretty indeed—something comparable to a natural flower. But imagine yourself doing that over a canvas in which forty-five life-size figures of richly clothed men are set in a display of gorgeous architecture, with a blue and white sky (the Sky of the Lagoons) over all. You have to draw aright each one of those many moving, gesticulating, busy human beings, and their expressive heads. You have to group them beautifully, so that even Raphael's scheme of proportion shall not excel yours in merit and interest—though it may differ from it. And you have to keep everywhere your effect of rich and delicate colour seen under strong, pure daylight. Veronese may be to some, the chief of painters, true "man of the centre." He

has been that to me since I first saw his work in Venice in 1860.[1] And it is good to remember that his light and colour are those of daylight, not of a persistent pallid dawn or mellow sunset, and that in this way he is a realist, as opposed to such idealism as that of Corot or of Correggio.

[1] After fifty years of critical writing about Italian painting with but slight mention of Veronese, we have two admirable studies of his work, by John La Farge in *McClure's Magazine* for September, 1904, and by Kenyon Cox in *Scribner's Magazine* for December, 1904; reprinted in *Old Masters and New*, 1905.

I print here a part of my notice of Paolo, from the "Manual of the Jarves Collection of Early Italian Pictures" which was published in 1868 by Yale College (now Yale University). "There is much of his finest work in the perfect condition of painting which, having been rightly executed in the first place, need not fear natural decay. . . . Veronese lacks something of Titian's senatorial grandeur of design, and something of his never-failing skill in drawing the human form, for there are pictures by Veronese in which the nude form has been imperfectly rendered; his colour is less solemn and deep than Titian's, his composition less dashing and broad than Tintoret's. He is simple and unaffected in his style, a Giorgione of a later time and of greater accomplishments. His colouring is bright and pure, and so harmoniously united with an elaborate system of light and shade, that it may be doubted if anywhere in art this union of truth of colour, truth of chiaroscuro, and truth of form has been so perfect as in the works of Paolo. He is a decorative painter in all his tastes; loves, as do all the Venetians, splendour of dress and of architecture, fills the backgrounds of his pictures with stately piles of pure Renaissance buildings of noble design, and delights in tracing the patterns of rich silk in and out of the folds of drapery."

Plate XXVIII[1] is the picture called in Venice *Il Convito del Signore;* but it is to be accepted as it is inscribed, The Supper at the House of Levi. The splendid magnate who stands in front, relieved against the great pier at the left of the middle archway is clothed wholly in green, of several shades, and it is this piece of bravado—this triumphant result of the seemingly rash attempt to get noble colour out of something all green, that gives its most popular name to the piece. But indeed it is hopeless to analyze the picture, which is nearly as full of incident as the famous Marriage of Cana in the Louvre, where the spectator looks down upon the scene; while this has that incident less displayed, less insisted on, because of the flat plane on which the scene is set—a floor not three feet below the eye of

[1] Il Convito, or the Feast; generally taken as the Supper in the house of Levi (Luke 5: 29): and known to travellers as The Green Man, from the figure dressed entirely in green and relieved against the columns of the left hand pier: Oil on canvas, about forty-one feet long. Painted for the Convent of SS. Giovanni and Paolo in 1572, by Paolo Caliari, called Paul Veronese (1528–1588): inscribed on the two pedestals at head of stairs, Fecit D. Covi. Magnu. Levi: Lucæ Cap. V: A. D. MDLXXIII: Die XX Apr.

the spectator. The smaller and simpler picture, the Marriage of Cana, in the Dresden Gallery (Plate XXIX)[1] gives one a more easily grasped composition, and shows in itself how this king of painters of the visible world used his material. The simple and natural movements of body and expression of face, the easy and unaffected narrative, the subdued splendour, as of noble architecture and splendid stuffs put to daily use, are as characteristic of Paolo as the exquisite colouring, which does not help us much —and the faultless drawing. And we may note the insistence upon the central incident, the making of the wine, with the master of the feast inspecting its colour and transparency, and a guest tasting it; two other guests watching eagerly as wine is poured from a jar into the glass of one of them, and another personage turning from the table with eager inquiry in the face—those figures put into the very middle of the composition.

[1] The Marriage of Cana: In oil on canvas, fifteen feet eight inches long. In the Dresden Picture Gallery. Painted by Paul Veronese: see former footnote.

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Plate XXIX.—THE MARRIAGE AT CANA; PAUL VERONESE.

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Plate XXX.—THE RING OF S. MARK; PARIS BORDONE.

With the Venetians' love of festivity and display, they had also something worth showing; architecture, stuffs, sculpture, painting and wrought gold, and all that in a city where there was neither mud nor dust, nor beast of burden nor noise of wheels. To show this Venetian spirit aright, we need other examples than the world-famed pictures; we need such a bit of painted legend as the one given in Paris Bordone's Ring of Saint Mark. For it is recorded that a fisherman was persuaded to go forth into the storm, conveying three noble-looking men—that they accomplished a great and saving miracle, and told the fisherman to ask his pay of the Doge. And when a pledge or token was asked for, one of the wonder-working three drew a ring from his finger, and said: "These are Saint Nicholas and Saint George, I am Saint Mark; this ring will be found missing from my treasury; show this to the Doge." Plate XXX[1] gives this picture and it is

[1] The fisherman presenting the ring of S. Mark to the Doge: Oil on canvas, twelve feet high. In the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice; by Paris Bordone (1500–1570).

worthy of note that it is lovely in colour, and one of the great triumphs of painting in the wise distribution of light. While it lacks the dignity of a first-rate Veronese, and the energy of a great picture by Tintoretto, there is a tranquil and pervading excellence in it which invites comparison with any single picture in Venice. It is only by considering the vast amount of noble work done by one of the three or four great masters of painting that one perceives their superiority to a man of one picture—or of two or three.

There is still, however, one consideration of weight, that this picture is a precursor of the very modern Pictures of Incident. It is necessary to treat that matter, fully, in Chapter IX; but it may be said here that something is lost to art, the moment that the observer's attention is called, strongly, to story and sentiment. It was one of the great safeguards of painting in the fifteenth century and the following epoch, that the stories to be told were the familiar stories of Bible History and saintly legend.

The picture making of Italy in the sixteenth century, and again after the year 1600, is not to be rightly understood without some reference to those pictures which were made for poor people, or at least for popular use. They are, of course, the work of the engraver, prints on paper taken from wood blocks or copper plates; and one peculiar class of these designs, known especially by the not wholly appropriate term of chiaroscuro (that is to say, light and shade) pictures, are simply prints from two or more wood blocks in different tints of gray or brown. It is often hard to trace the exact authorship of these. Two or three names especially well known to the collectors of old engravings—Vicentino, Andreani, Coriolano—those are the names best known, because set forth in the volumes of Bartsch, the famous book of reference with which all students of old engravings begin. Bartsch insists upon the special merits of Ugo da Carpi as the actual engraver most to be admired. The

illustration (Plate XXXI)[1] represents a print from four blocks on a gray paper so that it is a composition in five tints from nearly white to a dark gray approaching blackness. It is signed with the monogram, the double A, of Andrea Andreani, with the addition of the words "*in mantova* 1604." Ugo da Carpi is the engraver whom Bartsch would fix upon as the actual author. But as neither the artist nor the precise purpose that he had in mind can now be ascertained, it is merely a very beautiful composition in light and shade with which we are concerned.

[1] Print from woodcut, four blocks: ascribed to Andrea Andreani; but it is the opinion of many students that Andreani was an artist with a workshop and that he published the works of other masters as his own.

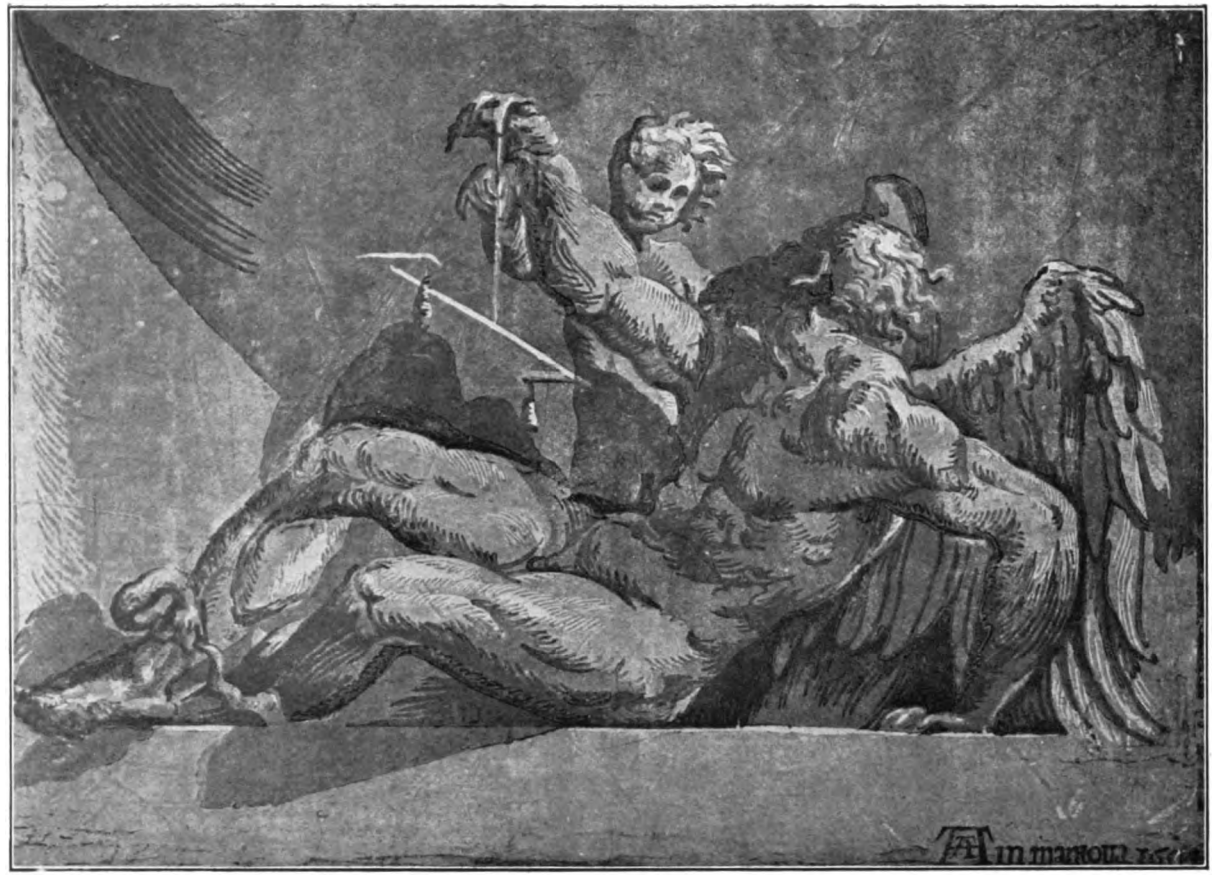

Plate XXXI.—SATURN; CHIAROSCURO PRINT.

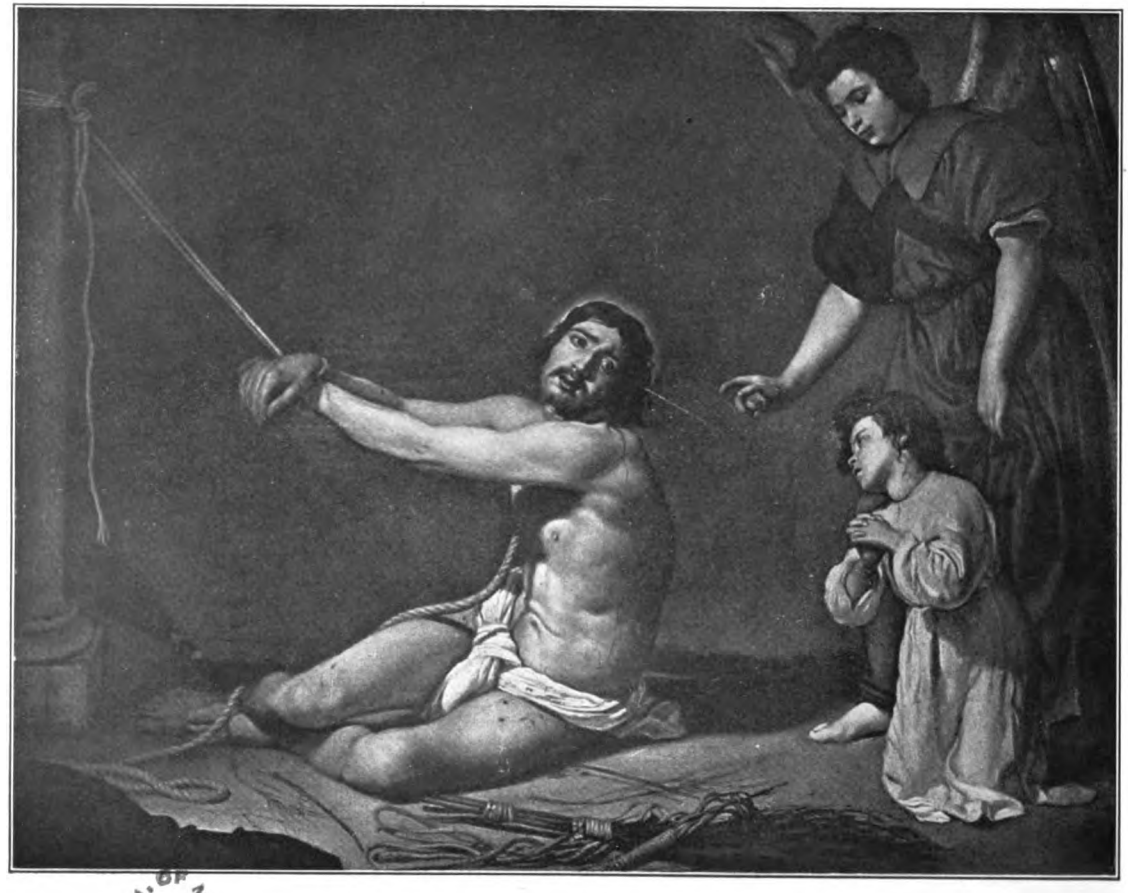

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Plate XXXII.—CHRIST AT THE PILLAR; VELASQUEZ.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

THE art of Velasquez is a great puzzle for the student of painting, at least in the first years. That artist is accepted by competent critics as impeccable, as complete in all that the draughtsman and the painter in oils need know, and as one of the most sincere and profound natures that have devoted themselves to art. And yet his pictures are found to have very little charm. They do not record an event nor yet a legend and so the first, most obvious way to popularity is wanting; they deal with portraiture or with themes not to be fully understood outside of Spain, or with subjects as hard to look into as Dürer's mysterious designs. And such grace as Raphael's is absent. The Forge of Vulcan is without classical grace of form or charm of face, although Apollo is one of the personages; the God Mars is a helmeted, nude man—

nothing more; the famous Mercury and Argus has no Grecian atmosphere, no Mediæval energy, no modern pathos. The Topers (Los Borrachos) seems to defy rational interpretation and is violent in its rendering of character. The court scenes are formal, stilted; even the famous picture of the Little Maids of Honour (Las Meninas) apart from its technical and purely artistic excellence, is a study of the ugliest costumes, giving the stiffest lines; and the strange horses with their conventional prancing action mar the royal portraits in which they appear. There is seldom an effect of deep and glowing colour; never, probably, a gentle and pearly tone. I remember well my first introduction to an important Velasquez, the Christ at the Pillar (Plate XXXII)[1] and the sad disappointment which seemed to await one whose memory was full of the charm of Venetian colour. Indeed, it requires the maturity of one's judgment and experience to see in the

[1] Christ at the Pillar: Oil, canvas, six feet eight inches long, dated 1639, in the National Gallery, London; by Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velasquez (1599–1660).

work of Velasquez what it is that makes him great.

To know Velasquez aright, one must work in the Prado Museum, of course; and yet, as there are forty undoubted canvases in Northern Europe (without counting St. Petersburg) and Italy, of which number there are about twenty in and near London—or again, as there are three in the Louvre, and five in the National Gallery and three in the Dresden Museum—so there is material elsewhere than in Madrid. Moreover there is devoted to this artist a consummate piece of art criticism, probably the finest thing of the sort in the English language, "The Art of Velasquez," by R. A. M. Stevenson.[1] This book has been called by English critics a statement of the doctrine of impressionism, and this definition may pass as not unfair, provided the author and the reader are agreed upon this—that Impressionism is not merely a whim; not a contemporary fancy of a few

[1] I refer to the quarto of 1895, but probably the small volume of 1899 (Great Masters Series) is the same work.

"come-outers"; but one of the two or three great principles of technique, among which the artist will choose this or that one as a controlling principle, the master theme of the picture. And now see what Stevenson says:

"Velasquez relies on tone, on the magic of true light, on delicate adjustments of proportion between masses to unite the many figures of 'The Spinners' and 'Las Meninas.' As to harmonious lines he trusts to them in composing a picture as little as he trusts to defined lines in his rendering of form. He never cuts up a figure or face by lines drawn round the eyes, lips, or other features [by which is meant, not separately drawn outlines, but distinct edges, clear traceable limits of feature or of other detail]; he gives a sense of intimacy by gradations of tone rather than by fixed contours. Thus, while a painted Holbein differs very little in method and aim from a Holbein drawing on white paper, a picture by Velasquez belongs altogether to another branch of art.

Within the scope of Velasquez' own work, and even of his later work, the difference between Italian traditional composition and the new impressionistic composition may be easily illustrated. The 'Coronation of the Virgin' (Prado, 1056) is arranged upon the system of balanced blocks of colour and harmonious play of lines. But I have no doubt that even in this picture a purist in old mastery would object to the direction of the cherub's wings, which point out of the picture and downwards, instead of in and upwards. A man who composes best by tone abandons nature at some peril, when, as here, he undertakes to show purely ideal circumstances."

Now it is evident that these criticisms are borne out by The Christ at the Pillar. A photograph can give the effect of a Velasquez far more nearly than the effect of a Paul Veronese. The determination of the artist to use tone (not hue or colour for its own sake, not passages of red and blue, but passages of slightly coloured brown and gray), makes it comparatively easier for the

photographer to follow him into all but his most subtile refinements. The essence of this picture is the relieving of the rounded body upon the dusky background, with a slightly marked aureole forming a mere play of light around the head and hardly vying in brilliancy with the light upon the flesh. The figures at the right of the composition are not very dignified as studies of drapery, nor very significant in gesture. The picture is the work of a man to whom workmanship in oil paint is nearly everything. He takes the carefully laid pigment as his one object; he caresses it, he loves to give it that slow and gentle gradation which the draughtsman in monochrome finds to be his only delight. If we were to put ourselves in the position of a consummate artist in lithography, or a mezzotint engraver of the highest possible rank, seeking to render that which his art specially offers him, the expression of the most gentle gradation alternating with the most strenuous contrast, we should have some insight into the feelings of a painter

like Velasquez. There is, of course, a further intellectual significance in the painter's work, for he has, after all, variety of hue, which he can add to his work continually in small patches, in slight but influential points of coloured light.

The Christ of the National Gallery (see footnote p. 150), is a picture of his middle life, and Plate XXXIII [1] gives a wonderful work of the latest time. In this picture there is seen one of the most beautiful compositions possible. Compare the mere black-and-white of this picture with the finest Italian painting of whatever school, the latter—the Italian picture—will be called upon to show cause why it should not be put into a secondary rank. And yet as regards this matter of composition, we have seen from Mr. Stevenson's remarks above that the special advocates of the Impressionistic doctrine, which is that the most important thing in a picture is its ordered

XXXIII

[1] The Spinners, Las Hilanderas (apparently painted in the royal tapestry manufactory in the later years of the artist after 1651): Oil, canvas; in the Museum of the Prado, Madrid; nine feet four inches long.

grouping of tones, hold that the composition of Velasquez is not a matter of line nor even of rounded mass when considered as pieces of drawing; but as the alternation of tone with tone and the play of these tones in making up the whole composition. The idea is that you may compose in chiaroscuro if you like, that is, using darks and lights on the main subject and alternating or contrasting those, as your main scheme —or in line if you like, leading your bounding line into lovely curves—or in mass if you like, as where a piece of drapery balances or echoes another or even a more solid thing than drapery. The simple construction seen in The Christ at the Pillar is yet as obviously deliberate as the complex design of the Spinners. If one is seeking for lovely outlines, beauty of pose, harmony in that kind of proportion which we look for principally in Raphael, he will find it, I think, in the group of two figures at the right hand. Certainly nowhere in art is there a more exquisite figure than the girl in the foreground whose left arm is

Plate XXXIII.—LAS HILANDERAS; VELASQUEZ.

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Plate XXXIV.—THE GOLD-WEIGHER; REMBRANDT.

stretched out to arrange her skein of yarn; and the half seen figure behind her is equally faultless in its disposition. This, then, is one of those works of fine art, the enjoyment of which is left for the most matured judgment. It is like the Samson Agonistes: you think you admire Milton, and do indeed know his odes by heart and revel in their charm, but the drama is apt to seem cold and unattractive to you until you have read Milton for thirty years. It is like the Phœnix and the Turtle, that mystical piece of verse which Emerson speaks of in the preface to his delightful Anthology, called "Parnassus," insisting upon it that the critics should write monographs upon it till its full significance is explained, while the specialists, the Shakespeare commentators, are apt to sniff at it as not certainly belonging to Shakespeare, and as being an unfortunate piece of Elizabethan fantasticality. In short, the student is not to be very much disturbed in his own enjoyment of art if he finds that he cannot take Velasquez for all the enthusiastic spe-

cialists claim for him. There is immeasurable joy to be got in the study of art without a full understanding of this exponent of pure technical painting.

A man who is very nearly the contemporary of Velasquez, Rembrandt the Dutchman, is the author of paintings which, in a certain sense, resemble those of the Spanish master. The Dutchman and the Spaniard agree in this—that they are colourists if you give a certain peculiar significance to that term, while yet they do not revel in effects of brilliant colour. If you ask a devoted worshipper of Rembrandt how he can call his favourite master a colourist, the answer is that he saw nature in masses of hue and tint rather than in lines, and in solid form; that to him neither grace of outline, nor dignity of pose and gesture, nor effects of solidity and projection, nor perspective and the relief of foreground objects upon background, are any of them as important as the starting into light of a patch of surface strengthened and made effective by dusky surroundings. Now, as in the

art of painting this brilliant patch must be either gray or green or of some other apparent hue in its general effect, so the artist who cares primarily for light and shade and is painting in oil, will be led to give colour effects to his finished work. Leonardo, when he is shading a piece of drapery, refuses, rejects the colour of it altogether. The stuff was green or brown, but he will have none of it; he shades it as if it were a white thing dimly seen in twilight, or a dark gray thing seen by a brighter light; that is to say, he shades it in an academic fashion, working for roundness, working for projection, for ridges alternating with recesses,—in short for form expressed by light and shade of no colour at all. If, after all, he must have the effect of blueness (for instance) given to a mantle which he has already shaded up complete in gray, he will add that blueness over the surface, as it were, that is to say it is an afterthought. In Rembrandt, however, as in Velasquez, the yellowish-brown buff coat, and the steel cuirass over it, are painted for their brown-

ish and bluish lustre as completely as a draped senator in a Venetian picture is painted for the reflections and the play of colour upon his gold brocade. It is true that in looking at your Rembrandt you will find that the least attractive pieces of colour in the picture are in those patches which are meant to be blue or red. The silk sash of vivid hue girded around the buff coat will be a good deal less attractive than the buff coat itself, especially to the eye of the enthusiastic lover of colour.

Rembrandt, then, is essentially the artist of light and shade of the most attractive kind; that is to say, of the light and shade which is based upon the effects of nature. If he prefers those effects as seen in the changing lights on a piece of yellow leather of soft surface, and enjoys the bringing of these into extraordinary prominence and relative importance by their relief upon an almost wholly dark background, it is still as a yellow piece of light and shade and not as a piece of mere blackening and

whitening that the personage is brought to the front of the composition.

And so in the wonderful etchings which make up Rembrandt's best known class of work, it is evident that the artist has seen, in its colours as it was before him, the object which he represents. He takes "local colour" and gives it its true valuation, the dark garment being treated in a black and white gradation as a very different thing from the light-coloured garment near. Let us consider the famous Gold-weigher, an etching of which undoubtedly the disposition is by Rembrandt himself, as well as the engraving of the exquisite central figure. See in Plate XXXIV[1] how the light from a window which is not in the picture falls upon the table with its heavy, embroidered cloth, the bags of gold and the open ledger of Uytenbogaert, and especially upon his face, and the curious linen gorget and soft cap.

[1] Uytenbogaert, The Gold-weigher: Print from etching, (Bartsch 279), of which the work is mainly by an assistant (Haden says, Ferdinand Bol) but the head and the furs, as well as the whole composition, are by Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1607-1669).

There is perfect solidity: the mass of the man is entirely present before you: he measures a good many inches around the chest, as you see in spite of his heavy enveloping robe. The one hand rests quite lightly upon the cash book, while the other holds the definite and considerable weight of the bag of gold which he hands to an attendant, and the action of these two arms, so differently employed, is expressed with faultless accuracy, little as we see their outline. Or take the wonderful Raising of Lazarus, of which the composition in light and shade is assuredly by Rembrandt. There is realism of pose combined with the most slight and suggestive drawing. In order to express the strong lighting of the figures on the right, including the rising Lazarus, those figures are left as indicated by the slightest touches; the solidity of the body in the upright figure with the hands raised in astonishment is expressed by the most abstract shading, the head is characterized by lines so few that they could be counted without trouble, thin and slight as

they are; and the lightest drawn figure of all is perhaps the Lazarus, done with that astonishing reserve of action and expression of face, which makes it to some of us one of the most impressive figures in the whole world of graphic art.

Or take The Omval, that exquisite landscape reproduced in Plate XXXV.[1] There is to be found "outline" as we are wont to call it, doing the work of elaborate modelling. No part of the landscape can be ascribed to any hand but that of Rembrandt himself; the laying in of the close texture of lines which round the tree-trunks and the foliage in the near foreground, is not as masterly as the indications of distance and the figure on the shore; but this is merely because there are more artists who could do the concentrated working up of the left hand of the picture than there are who could do anything at all like the open drawing of the two shores of the river, the stream itself, the houses, mills and boats on

[1] View of The Omval, a bend of the Amstel River near Amsterdam: Print from etching (Bartsch 209) on copper, by Rembrandt: see previous note.

the distant shore, and especially that extraordinary personage who stands with his back to us looking fixedly at the boat.

Our business in this book is with the making of pictures, and not with the processes of etching any more than with the processes of oil painting, and it is as a picture that this print is given. We are fortunate, when we reach the middle of the seventeenth century, in being able to find the handiwork of some masters in pure black and white without that colouring which we cannot reproduce in our plates. And if this picture also introduces us to the modern world of landscape art, that also is fortunate, for there is no landscape painter, even among those devoted to that art alone, whose work shows a more masterly sense of what the art is in its highest refinement than Rembrandt himself.

There is another way in which Rembrandt opens up a new branch of our subject, and that is his close connection with the Dutch school of painting which was to follow him. The artists whom we know

Plate XXXV.—THE OMVAL; REMBRANDT.

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By Courtesy of Charles Scribner's Sons.

Plate XXXVI.—OFFICERS OF S. ADRIAEN'S SHOOTING GUILD; FRANS HALS.

as Terburg, De Hoogh, Van Ruysdael and Hobbema, would not have been what they are to us had they not been the followers of the giant Rembrandt. They introduce to us a world of art different from that of the Italians, different from that of Velasquez, or even of the great Northerners of early times, the Flemings or their successors Rubens and Van Dyck. The Dutchmen are students of domestic life, of simple every-day incidents, or of that quiet series of situations which are hardly to be called incidents—so tranquil and inactive does it seem. And yet the first instances that we must give of the Dutch painters are a little less homelike than those which must follow, for the famous portrait groups of the years between 1560 and 1640 are often stately enough.

These portrait groups are a specialty of the Dutch-speaking people of the Netherlands. There were but slight extensions of the custom to even the Austrian Netherlands, the country which we now call Belgium. There were such pictures painted in

the fifteenth century when certain parties of pilgrims to the Holy Land had their journey recorded by a common picture of themselves. The idea was taken up again when Dutch resistance to Spanish rule culminated in the sixteenth century, and, as it was applied to military and semi-military groups in those times of storm, so it served, in the more peaceful days that followed, for the record of the Boards of Control of Guilds, of hospitals, of charitable organizations. What would it not be to us could we have our portraits painted in one group, when six or ten of us work together in some artistic or literary or reformatory movement! But indeed the untraceable tendencies are now to make the artist's work too expensive for such familiar uses.

Plate XXXVI[1] is the picture by Frans Hals known as the Shooting Company of Saint Adriæn. It represents the officers of that corps about to start on an expedition

[1] Portrait Group; the officers of a company of citizen soldiers: Oil on canvas, eight feet nine inches long; in the City Museum of Haarlem, kingdom of the Netherlands. By Frans (Franciscus) Hals (1584–1666).

and taking some refreshment; but the rather excessive splendour of sashes and embroidered belts, and ruffs of the most elaborate pattern, suggest a non-realistic preparation for this pose. The picture is full of a simple and freely distributed daylight, and Fromentin in his careful examination of the picture[1] calls attention to the flatness of the modelling—the absence of a deliberate system of chiaroscuro. The surprising vivacity and individuality of the heads, each one distinguished while all remain easily in the picture, would be more than surprising—it would be inconceivable —but for the hundred years of practice in such portrait groups that had passed before.

When, in the seventeenth century in days of hard-won peace and wealth, the Dutch created an art of painting of their own, it took landscape as one of its primal and most approved subjects of study, and it applied the methods of landscape to scenes of the interior, domestic scenes, scenes of tranquillity and daily life. The early and

[1] Les Maîtres d'Autrefois, La Hollande, Chap. XI.

somewhat formal rendering of the interior scene is given for us by the picture of Egidius van Tilborch, reproduced in Plate XXXVII.[1] It is very curious to see how we have not yet reached simplicity and a natural every-day look of things. The family has prepared itself; everything is going on at once. The mother with her embroidery, the oldest girl at her spinet, the sixteen-year-old girl with her lace pillow, and so on into all the details of the son and the clerk at the father's side and the servants in the background. Every one is carefully dressed for the occasion and nothing looks a little left to chance except the solid shutters of the windows high in the wall, according to that admirable modification of the domestic window which let in daylight in floods straight from the sky and discouraged looking out of window. But the change to nature and

[1] Interior of a Dutch residence: Oil on canvas, forty-four inches long. On the harpsichord are painted the two mottoes: "Concordia res parvæ crescunt. Discordia maximæ dilabuntur." In the Museum of Brussels. By Egidius van Tilborch, the Younger (1625– abt. 1678).

Plate XXXVII.—AN INTERIOR; EGIDIUS VAN TILBORCH.

Plate XXXVIII.—AN INTERIOR; DIRK HALS: OR JAN MOLENAER.

simplicity was quick to come; a very small picture shown in Plate XXXVIII,[1] cannot be more than five years later than the picture by Van Tilborch. Here, with the head-dress and laces of about 1650, a young woman sits at her *claveçin*, of which the top is thrown up, showing an elaborate landscape painted on its largest panel. The children beside her are put in with perfect feeling for their probable action, and they and she are sitting for their portraits without any appearance of being harassed by the consciousness of the painter's presence and his occupation.

It has been pointed out, frequently, by writers on painting, that these pictures of familiar incident do not describe any particular event or any fixed moment of time. They are not stories—they are simply a record of what the painter saw as he looked into a quiet room with its furniture and its usual inhabitants. That he saw more than

[1] An Interior: The Lady of the Harpsichord. Oil on canvas, twenty inches high. In the National Museum of Amsterdam. Ascribed to Dirk Hals (bef. 1600–1656): also to Jan Miense Molenaer (abt. 1610–1668).

another visitor would have seen—that he saw interesting play of light, interesting gloss of silk and flash of glass or metal, light and shade and colour, was due to the fact that he was by nature and by habit a maker of pictures. Such a picture was better fitted to hang upon the walls of just such another room than would be a religious picture or a thrilling battle-piece, or a strong appeal to memory and to passion. In like manner the long list of pictures by Jan Steen, the close contemporary of that Ruisdael of whom there is question below, includes probably not one which undertakes a narrative, a record, even a legend: always excepting the Bible-histories. Thus in the museums of northwestern Europe there are the Quack Doctor, the Village Festival, the Fish Seller, for out-of-door subjects, and these many times repeated: and, for indoor life, the Music Lesson, the Happy Family, and so on: nothing of a more special character. Consider the decorations of the room shown in Plate XXXVII (and they are worth looking at—these be-

ginnings of modern ways of living): there are two paintings on the wall represented with minute care. Each one is framed in black or a very dark-coloured wood. The one hangs a little higher because it is above the chimney-piece, the other lower—and tilted "off the wall" because the light from the window directly opposite would, otherwise, make a dazzling reflection on the surface. One of these pictures is a simple landscape, the work of a contemporary of the very people who sat in that room to be painted, and the man who painted them—it looks like a Hobbema. The other picture on the wall is a bustling scene of life, with peasants on the road apparently coming from market, and a mounted official. And this picture of life is probably no more of an event than the landscape itself—it shows how the peasant journeyed homeward, along the road, after every market day.

So it was that when out-of-door nature began to take up the attention of the Netherland folk, the Dutch landscape art became just such a medium of light and

colour with pleasant composition in simple masses. Jakob Van Ruysdael is the chief of the Dutch landscape painters. One of the greatest and most serious minds that has devoted itself to fine art, he contented himself willingly with the sea-beaches and the stretches of flat land of his native province. Any list of his pictures abounds in such titles as "Landscape with Water Mill"; "Landscape with Figures"; "Landscape known as *Le Coup de Soleil*"—the last, a famous painting in the Louvre.

Plate XXXIX[1] is such a picture, and it is known as L'Estacade, that is to say it takes its name from the stockade of heavy timber which acts as a sea-wall, and protects the low artificial shore—the dykes which made Holland and Zealand prosperous and fertile countries. This is a noble picture—a piece of rich and sombre colouring, and in that respect few of the Dutchmen are the equals of Ruysdael. But con-

[1] Une Tempête sur le bord des Digues, called also L'Estacade: Oil on canvas; five feet long; by Jakob Ruysdael, Van Ruysdael or Ruisdael (1625–1682) and signed J. Ruisdael. In the Museum of the Louvre.

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Plate XXXIX.—L'ESTACADE; RUISDAEL.

Plate XL.—UNE RADE; VAN ANTOINISSEN.

sider a painting in the Antwerp Museum, the work of a man much less in favour, Hendrik Van Antoinissen. That tranquil presentation of sea and sky, Plate XL,[1] with the low land varied in its sky-line by trees and windmills, the masts of vessels and a dismantled hulk, the foreground and the middle distance full of every-day life of that amphibious country the United Provinces: that is true Dutch landscape. It is the most strikingly modern piece of painted thought that can be offered.

As a complete contrast, in spirit and meaning, take a nearly contemporary picture, the fine Claude (Plate XLI).[2] This is "landscape art" viewed from a different standpoint. The Dutchman is fond of his shores as he knows them, and his own familiar harbours and roadsteads, and he finds that his fellow Dutchmen will buy of him gladly just such subjects delicately

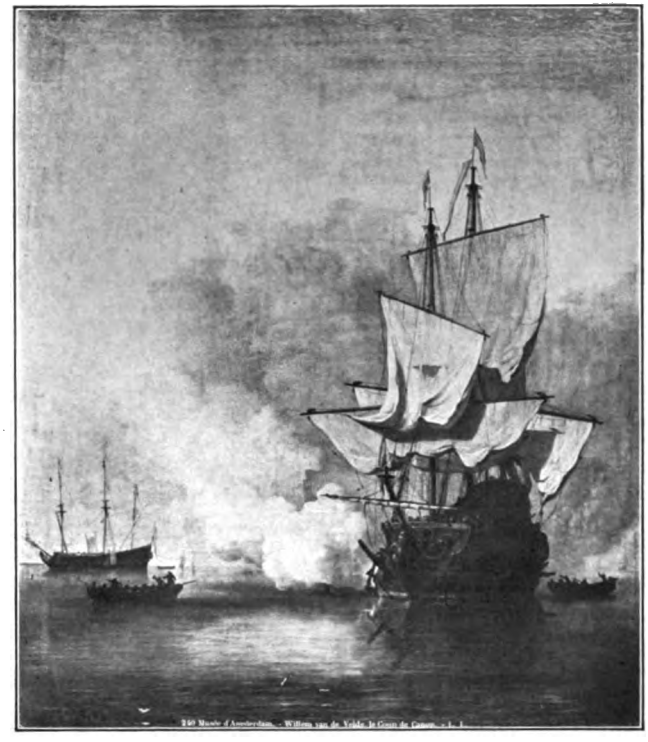
[1] A Roadstead (Une Rade): Painting in oil on canvas, about forty inches long, in the Antwerp Museum. By Van Antonissen or Van Antoinissen (1605–1647).

[2] Return of Chryseis to her father: Oil on canvas, about five feet long; in the Louvre. By Claude Gelée, called Claude le Lorain or Claude Lorrain (1600–1662).

and neatly painted on small canvases. Therefore he gives to these simple, familiar subjects the full strength of his happy and quiet work, asking no excitement as of "foreign parts" or of strained incidents. But the Italianized Frenchman, Claude, cannot put up with such simplicity; he has lived so long in Italy that he dreams (for all the world like our travelled architects of the twentieth century) of Roman grandeur and of the imagined Bay of Naples as it was under the Great Empire. So he paints these stately neo-classic colonnades, and this magnificence of architectural perspective, towering above the lapping water of the anchorage ground. He cares nothing about Chryseis; but as he enjoys the fine cattle, and the landing of them in boats, and as it would never do to follow the Dutch plan, and call his picture *Un Quai*, or *Un Débarcadère*, so he bethinks him of the Iliad, and adopts a classic name. The picture is, one sees, too crowded for reality. There is very little room between these stone piers and sea-walls, in the foreground, and the pro-

Plate XLI.—RETURN OF CHRYSEIS TO HER FATHER; CLAUDE GELÉE.

*a.* A WATERFALL; RUISDAEL.



*b.* LE COUP DE CANON; VAN DE VELDE.

Plate XLII.

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jecting mole with a fort on the end of it which is only half a mile away. Such large vessels as those at anchor can hardly be imagined as crowded together within so minute an anchorage as this one, while yet there are seen no working quays or piers except that one which fills the extreme foreground—all the rest being given up to Imperial villas,—to the most stately and costly architecture of display. What, then, is the charm of Claude's pictures? It is chiefly in his lovely golden sunshine, and sun-colour rendered with some approach to the splendid reality; and his power to represent the sun himself as the eye can see him, that is to say, through a mist or through thin clouds. Only a partial idea of the glory of golden colour in this painting is to be obtained from the photograph, but on the right of the large ship in the middle of the picture the sky is dazzlingly bright, and this at least the photograph can record.

The landscape painters of Holland were not often successful in stately effects; indeed, it is not such effects that they sought

for. When a picture of great and impressive character appears, it is apt to draw that dignity from something inherent in the natural subject itself. Thus, the famous picture by Ruisdael's contemporary, Minderhaut or Meindert Hobbema, the avenue of slender pollard trees, is one of the most popular pictures among all those which are accepted by critics as of permanent value; but this celebrity does not come from the masterly painting of Hobbema, though he was a clever executant; nor does it come from the artist's insight into nature, for his landscapes generally show a real deficiency in that feeling and knowledge which a painter of trees and quiet landscape needs. It comes of the peculiar attractiveness of the subject, the tapering perspective of the lines of slender trees; and the reader may consult for the essential cause of that picture's popularity a painting and also an etching by Max Klinger, and other modern pictures not quite so nearly like the Hobbema. The same motive has been taken up by nineteenth century artists with superior

feeling and insight to that possessed by Hobbema. It is indeed hard for the lover of landscape painting, if he is versed in the achievements of the nineteenth century Frenchmen and Englishmen (to say nothing of the American masters of this art) to accept Hobbema's painting of foliage at all. It is painfully laborious, without freedom and also without true significance. The difference in this respect between this and the thought of the great Jacob Van Ruysdael is prodigious, and while this cannot be shown aright in our halftone prints, the picture given in Plate XLII[1] may possibly suggest it. The painting of those deciduous trees at the right and at the left of the picture, and of those two evergreens which rise sharp against the sky, is as different as possible in straightforward efficiency from the not very significant work of Hobbema under similar conditions.

The picture by Willem van de Velde,

[1] Landscape called the Waterfall: Oil on canvas, thirty inches high; in the Antwerp Museum: by Jacob Ruisdael for whom see former note.

(Plate XLII)[1] must close our record here of the Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century. Here again there is nothing but quiet sea and ships at anchor, and the cannon-shot from which the picture takes its name is not fired in war, but as a mere salute or as a warning that sailing time has come, and that the passengers and the letters must really come on board.

The painting of the seventeenth century seems to pass insensibly into that of the eighteenth century in all that concerns the art of the Continent of Europe. If we are considering Great Britain the conditions differ, for indeed the splendid eighteenth century work of Hogarth, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Raeburn seems to arise, we know not whence—certainly not from the sixteenth century English engraved work, by Faithorne and the marvellous Bohemian Hollar. It is a somewhat familiar condition to modern students of art—that English painting should seem almost to be non-

[1] Marine view called Le Coup de Canon, about thirty inches high; in the National Museum at Amsterdam. By Willem van de Velde the Younger (1663–1707).

existent, and then should begin in a characteristic and original way. It was so after 1720 in the strong hands of Hogarth, and of Gainsborough twenty years later, and so it was at more than one epoch in the nineteenth century. The great and masterful schools of the Continent are frequently modified, even when under the strongest leadership, by unexpected influences coming over seas from England. But in the eighteenth century the intercourse between the nations was not as frequent, and the peculiar conditions of life in France made it unlikely that any such rebellious energy would show itself in the courtly painting of the Continent.

William Hogarth is known in a popular way by a great series of satirical engravings, some of which were engraved by his own hand, others by persons working for him and under his direction. It is by these alone that he is most commonly judged, for his reputation as a painter is the result of careful study of his work during the past half-century. And yet we know Hogarth

the painter, now, as an excellent technician; his pictures in the National Gallery are strong and brilliant, apparently as good as when they were painted,—the "Marriage à la Mode" in 1720; his own portrait a little later. It is to be admitted that he does not paint as charmingly as a great Dutchman of half a century before—as Ruisdael or as Cuyp or, in his department of small-scale figure subjects, as Jan Steen; there is not the same enjoyment in brushwork for its own sake, in the laying on of colour. Those men belonged to a school which had its great traditions: and so they had *learned to paint.* Neither has he the exquisite harmonies which were known to the artist of whom we have to speak next—the great painter Watteau; but here again there is that marked separation between the non-technical part of the work and the technique itself, and its immediate results. Hogarth is a better composer of groups of people engaged in some absorbing occupation, he does not exaggerate (unless with evident intent to caricature, and only now and

then); what he does is to individualize, and Jan Steen himself is by far his inferior in the separate characterization of persons in a picture. It is well to take, to represent Hogarth, a picture of more pathetic and less violent subject, and the sweet face of the lady in The Distrest Poet (Plate XLIII)[1] has recommended it to all art students. This is Hogarth's own engraving from his own design, and while it cannot be compared as a triumph of the graver's art with contemporary work in France, this also, like Hogarth's work in oil painting, meets his need and conveys his thought. It is hardly necessary to analyze it; but compare it with the picture by Watteau in the Louvre, shown in Plate XLIV,[2] and consider what a poor and slight subject has engaged the attention of that remarkable painter, a Venetian out of time.

[1] The Distrest Poet, designed and engraved by William Hogarth (1697–1764): Print twenty-one and one-half inches long. An original engraving, although the painting by the same hand exists.

[2] Gilles, otherwise called Pierrot: Oil on canvas, six feet high; in the Museum of the Louvre. By Jean Antoine Watteau (1684–1721).

This picture is known as Gilles, a character of the old popular comedy, Italian in origin but French by many years of naturalization. The other personages of the company, the Harlequin, the Columbine, and the rest, are grouped with their donkey in the middle distance, and the whole is set in a most exquisite landscape full of knowledge and observation of tree form and lovely in colour. The white garments of the clown himself are made the medium for most delicate colour-harmonies, combining, as they do, with the scene in which the figure is set. Call it a portrait with some of the critics—call the heads all portraits of celebrated actors of the day, as has been done, and the picture is not made thereby more important to us in the twentieth century. It hangs in an important place, amid a great and famous collection, and holds its own by sheer force of almost faultless technical character; but this canvas, with the equally large and more elaborate picture, *l'Embarquement pour Cythère*, and eight more also in the Louvre, to say

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Plate XLIII.—THE DISTREST POET; HOGARTH.

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Plate XLIV.—GILLES; WATTEAU.

nothing of the splendid Watteaus collected by Frederick the Great and kept at Sans Souci, in Potsdam,—all have the same character of total lack of subject. He is officially *peintre des fêtes galantes*, and it is his business to group courtiers and dames of honour, thinly disguised as peasants, sometimes in ordered gardens—sometimes in wilder landscape—less often indoors. And unfortunately his best technical work has been put into those insignificant things. There is a grace and ease of movement, and beauty of pose, an expressive treatment of the slighter gestures of hand and wrist, head and neck, which no painter has surpassed. And his drawing of the hands themselves, and the feet and ankles, is noteworthy for the grace that comes of complete knowledge. In his few pictures of common life he is not at his best; he is surpassed, perhaps, by Lancret, and certainly by Chardin. The three painters, all nearly contemporary, occupy the last years of the old French monarchy; but it is interesting to see how nearly their non-

official paintings resemble, in all artistic respects, the work of the Dutchmen, their immediate predecessors.

# CHAPTER VII

## RECENT ART: FORM AND PROPORTION

A GREAT controversy raged in the Paris world of painters during the years from 1820 to 1835. This contest was largely between two parties of enthusiastic students, the young, over-positive men of the first and second year after studentship; but it took the name of a contest between academic tradition and rebellious innovation; the name of a contest between draughtsmanship on the one hand and on the other hand colour, or painting as distinguished from drawing; the name of a contest between Ingres[1] and his followers, and Delacroix[2]

[1] Jean Dominique Auguste Ingres (1781–1867). Pupil of Jacques Louis David; lived long in Rome, then in Paris, but returned to Rome as Director of the school at the Villa Medici. There are fourteen pictures by him in the Louvre.

[2] Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix (1799–1863). Pupil of Pierre Guérin. Painted and exhibited constantly from 1822 to the end. There are eight paintings by him in the Museum of the Louvre, and also the important ceiling paintings in the gallery of Apollo.

and his followers. It is apt to be assumed by writers on the subject, that the reformers won a great victory. They hold that Delacroix and his teachings set the pace for the painting which was to follow, and that the design of the French school under the monarchy of July (1830–1848) was of this "romantic" character—at least in its main motive. It is asserted that Delacroix was the creator, almost, of a new epoch in art. Now, it is the glory of Delacroix that he saw the art of painting nearly as the Venetians saw it, as mainly a matter of beautiful coloured light investing natural objects. It is his great and unique merit that he worked on that line, discovering much, re-discovering more, bringing back the art of beautiful painting which had been little known in France during the century after Watteau's death. But it is not quite true that his example and his precept carried it over all opposition. It is not quite as Delacroix would have had them paint, that Frenchmen have painted, since 1850. For the worse, and also (it must be said) for the

better, recent French painting has escaped from Delacroix' influence.

In the first place, Delacroix was not himself a triumphantly good draughtsman. Indeed, his pictures which are most accessible, in the Louvre and elsewhere, are a little apt to excite remark by their notable deficiency of fine, or at least of dignified drawing. This peculiarity is the reverse of what is to be said about the recent Frenchmen: they draw well; it is their familiarity with and love of their pigments that is inadequate. On the other hand, Ingres, although his paintings in the Louvre and elsewhere are calculated to leave the spectator cold, and although it can hardly be said that there is to-day a school of Ingres-followers or Ingres-worshippers, has yet held, for many a workman of the French school, a place as the typical modern artist. It cannot be said that the devout and all-absorbing pursuit of drawing of the Ingres men has continued in full force; nor has painting rejected those aids and methods which Ingres pronounced unworthy. And

yet there is this to be said against any such theory as the one set forth above—the theory that Delacroix won the battle; that the French school, great, learned, powerful, all-pervading as it is, is a school of drawing and of light and shade, and not a school of colour.

I have said that for many students Ingres has held a place as the typical modern artist: that is as much as to say, he was accepted as showing the best that the first half of the nineteenth century could produce, in the way of highly abstract, highly conventional figure drawing,—in the careful study of form as distinguished from and even as separated from delicate light and shade and glowing colour. Who, then, is the typical artist of all time for such workmen? Who is he, whose paintings are those which, without any drawbacks or apologies, make up their ideal? There can be only one answer to this question. The artist whom the Frenchmen of the nineteenth century worshipped is Raphael. It was he whom the pupils and followers of

Ingres admitted to be their master's master.

This is stated merely as an answer to the assumption that the Delacroix school of colour and effect won the day, in the contests of about 1830. The great schools of recent times have been, especially since the middle of the nineteenth century, mainly schools of drawing. The private and public academies in France and elsewhere teach drawing and little else. It has been found practicable to give excellent instruction in drawing, using the antique, using the draped life, using the undraped living model. Practicing artists of merit and repute have been found willing and able to give such instruction: pupils, both men and women, have been found in abundance, ready and willing to follow their teaching: the result is seen in what is, altogether, an astonishing number of good draughtsmen. It is not meant that a large percentage of those students have become good draughtsmen; that would be an absurd contention: but the aggregate number is so very great

that even a small percentage of the whole is formidable in its mass. When one school of the United States boasts of 1,200 pupils at one time, when many schools exist with 300 or 400 each, it is found that there must be at any one time 20,000 so-called artists in the American community, all of them sufficiently taught to be capable of producing a picture of some sort which, when framed, might conceivably be hung on the walls of an exhibition. "But of those 20,000 not ten per cent. are of any great importance." That is true: not even five per cent. of them have thoughts to express which are expressible in any form of the arts of design; not five per cent. are accomplished artists, good alike in drawing and in brush-work, or if another process than oil painting is followed, in that process, whatever it may be. Not five per cent. are artists whose work any critical student would look at seriously with the idea of purchasing (say) for a public gallery, even one of moderate ambition and without a large fund. But a

large percentage of that 20,000 have been so well taught in the mere matter of linear drawing and in the mere matter of simple light and shade, such as you can put on with pen and ink, or with *sauce* and the stump, that their work may be purchased by a periodical or by a commercial house wishing to illustrate its advertisements. It is clear that there is employment in this way for draughtsmen of all grades above the very lowest. It is evident, too, that the better draughtsman comes to the front; that he or she who shows the power of drawing the human figure, and such necessary concomitants as dogs or horses, with some vivacity and without visible error, will be recognized; and moreover that a little more skill than this will be recognized still more readily, and will lead to steady employment. If we can suppose a pleasant turn of fancy, as in the disposition of figures, and a sense of humour demonstrable in the expression of face or the attitude of body, the artist's fortune may be supposed to be made, the fortune, that is, of

a well employed, steadily employed, useful workman. In these ways it has come about that our cities are full of persons who can draw, who can draw really with cleverness, with action, with energy, with a power of commanding the appearance of movement, which would have been thought surprising at a previous epoch—at almost any previous epoch. And note that in Paris such highly taught draughtsmen far exceed in number and in average skill all that the United States has to show.

You do not, as a matter of fact, see slovenly or childish drawing in the magazines very often. Sometimes you do; reasons other than those of artistic excellence have controlled the editor's choice of a designer, and a story will be illustrated by drawings in which it is plain that the artist could represent a profile only, not the figure and the head in full front; or that the artist was only capable of drawing these figures in consecutive order, one beside another—that a group was quite beyond his or her faculties. There was, in no less a picture

gallery than the pages of *Punch*,—amid the wonderful designs by Keene and the attractive and valuable studies of Teniell,—there was a long series of drawings of amazing ineptitude. Year after year those wretched things kept their place, drawings that were faulty in every imaginable respect, and without any attractiveness that the American student of *Punch* could perceive. Again, at a later and a very recent time, drawings as bad—though in other ways—were thrust upon the constant reader of *Punch* in every number, and that although such workmen as Phil May and Partridge, Corbould and Sambourne, were constantly at work, and adorned every number with their sympathetic art and their admirable fun. Still, the general truth of the proposition will hardly be disputed—of the proposition that the world of western Europe and the United States is full of artists, very clever indeed in so far as correct and even interesting drawing of the figure goes, not without some knowledge of what touches are needed to express landscape, or certain

parts and certain features of such landscape, and capable of a pleasant if somewhat superficial observation.

There are many ready and even skillful draughtsmen, but few persons who have found in drawing an easy and effective means of expressing themselves. There are many draughtsmen, but few, very few, artists. It remains true, what a well-known painter and veteran teacher said, four years ago—that, of a host of pupils, not one had exhibited anything which could be thought to have obtained its place on the walls by means of merit—not one had produced a picture that anybody ought to buy. This was meant in all gravity and sincerity, and was said not in the way of argument, but privately and to a person who was already in sympathy with the view expressed. What, then, does it signify?

It signifies this: These pupils may have become very good draughtsmen according to the standard set forth above, but not one of them had become skillful in the

choice and arrangements of lights and shades, in the choice and distribution of hues, in that kind of drawing which has been defined, The putting of the right thing in the right place. Or, if by chance some one of them possessed one or two of those gifts, the work of that pupil still lacked firmness, still lacked decision. The solid objects of the foreground lacked solidity; the sky, if sky was indicated, lacked distance and transparency; the trees, if any showed themselves, lacked the appearance of vitality and were without charm. In short, my informant would not have said, I know that he would not have said, that not one of his pupils had become a useful draughtsman, fit for magazine-work, fit for commercial employment. But he did insist upon his statement that there was no producer of interesting pictures among them.

"Commercial employment" — that is probably the chief difficulty. An advanced pupil who has absorbed by constant looking at illustrated weeklies and monthlies some

sense of the popular mode of these illustrations, finds that he will secure employment rather easily. He is delighted with the opportunity to make his living by his art, and he does not realize at all that he has not yet shown himself to be possessed of any complete fitness for his task as artist, nor of any artistic thoughts such as are the worthy causes of a picture's existence. It has already been suggested in these pages that the description in words of artistic thought is one of the most difficult things in the world, being, indeed, absolutely impossible in any complete sense. That is one chief reason why the pupils are so inadequately taught. Their teachers are wholly unable to tell them in words just what a picture should be—no teacher can tell a pupil that—surroundings and influences are needed, and in our modern communities those surroundings and influences are very commonly lacking. The non-existence of an artistic community with a mind of its own and a certain general agreement as to what a work of art ought to be,

throws the three-year or four-year student upon the public and the commercial employer; and they sympathize with his lower and less artistic gifts and powers and encourage their exclusive development.

Consider now another view of this same difficulty: this chapter is concerned with form in art, with the expression of form; and when we look at a number of modern pictures of any size and of any character, we find ourselves impressed with their general feebleness. They lack force, they lack initiative, they lack dignity. We may go, from the loftiest flights of modern painting in huge wall decorations, down through the whole series of works of diminishing size and perhaps diminishing importance, to the illustrations in the books of this year's issue, and we shall find that impression constantly growing upon us—the impression that modern art is not dignified. It is the highest off-hand and summary praise which one artist talking to another in the face of a newly exhibited picture can give to that picture—"Why,

Jones, this has the character of the great old work"; or else "That might be hung among the old masters in the Louvre." And if by chance the reader thinks that these words are not words of praise altogether—that they refer to and point out an obvious and undeniable difference, but not of necessity an artistical superiority, it can only be said that the feeling does exist among relatively large classes of our painters, the feeling that in spite of all the achievements of modern painting, there still lacks that characteristic of the old work—Dignity.

There is opportunity enough in these pages to insist upon the immense merit of contemporary art, and that opportunity is taken to the full. The advances made even in the mere matter of painting, since 1850, are notable and have received deserved attention in other writings;[1] the importance of modern colouring, and colour composition itself, are treated rather fully in Chapter VIII; the immense success of the

[1] See, especially, article by Frank Fowler in *Scribner's Magazine* (Field of Art) for August, 1901.

French school in the study of values, in the technical sense, is of necessity treated on almost every page. There remains, however, this admitted fact—that in composition modern pictorial art is not grandiose, but small, slight, perhaps graceful; and that in drawing the figure contemporary art is not strong, but rather dexterous, having much of that look of reality which comes from the use of instantaneous photographs, and skilled in minute details.

It is our business, then, to note the exceptions to this rule; and for this purpose let us choose first a work of art which might equally well have a place in Chapter X: as being truly monumental in character. Plate XLV[1] shows two panels of an im-

[1] Two panels of the Frieze of the Prophets in Sargent Hall. This Hall is twenty-three feet wide and twenty-six feet high and much longer than its width. It is roofed with a semi-circular tunnel-vault, and the lunette at the north end is filled with the often cited composition, The Conflict between Monotheism and Polytheism, in connection with the Jewish belief. The Frieze of the Prophets comes below this, running across the end wall and returning along the two side walls for a distance of about ten feet on each. Plate XLVa is the left-hand panel of the main frieze: Plate XLVb is the return on the right hand (the east) side. By John Singer Sargent, b. 1856 in Boston, U. S.; resides in London.

portant frieze in the Boston Public Library. The names of the individuals are above their heads, and the student of prophecy as set forth in our Old Testament may greatly enjoy the tracing, in its text, of Mr. Sargent's mental processes in creating these visible types which stand for the prophets named. The author of these decorative bands of stately figures is a portrait painter of great popularity, a popularity based upon the swift and rapid dexterity which his brother painters admire to the full, which they praise without reserve, and which many of them envy in a frankly outspoken way, saying that *bravura*, or in more ordinary parlance, brilliancy or dash, is the special characteristic of the brushwork and even of the drawing. Sargent has gained so exceptional a mastery over the human form as expressible on flat surfaces, and over the effects of his pigments when applied to those surfaces, that he is as nearly faultless —as nearly sufficient unto all his needs—as any artist of our time; while having a singular force and fire of his own, growing

*a*

*b*

*From a Copley Print, Copyright* 1896 *by Curtis & Cameron, Publishers, Boston.*

Plate XLV.—TWO PANELS OF FRIEZE OF THE PROPHETS; J. S. SARGENT.

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Plate XLVI.—WAITING TO CROSS; ALBERT MOORE.

in part out of that skill which enables him to draw and to paint so well and so swiftly and with so little apparent effort, and growing in part out of a natural mood of mind leading him to such vigorous composition as is seen in these pictures. The two pictures (Figures *a* and *b* of Plate XLV), are certainly to be compared with the work of the great Venetians for dignity and gravity of well handled light and shade, to be compared to the masterpieces of the Florentine sixteenth century for decorative effect. And yet to say that they are altogether equal to those works of old time is to say too much, because where all is very different it cannot be asserted in a moment that the two different things are of equal force and of equal importance. It takes time to pronounce upon any such comparison as that. If the student finds in these figures a certain modernity in the freedom of gesture, he is not to assume too hastily that dignity is lacking. Lack of dignity is indeed the primary fault in modern figure drawing, and it is on this very account that it is hard to

recognize dignity when we find it. The figures in a great painting by Masaccio (see Plate VI), by Raphael (see Plate XX), by Paul Veronese (see Plate XXVIII), do not gesticulate in just the way in which these prophets move the hands and sway the body. It is not merely that you do not find among the ancients those gestures of Haggai and of Malachi, or that concentrated pose of Amos or of Daniel. You will not find even gestures that remind you of those. And again as for the drapery; the conventions have changed. How is it that Daniel is clothed? The head-dress seems to be the fourteenth century hood, enlarged; that strange garment which could be fitted on the head like a cap, or twisted round head and neck like a scarf: the gown seems also to be a Florentine citizen's gown made fuller. We might trace out the origin of each of these costumes, while still accepting the fact that they are built up on wholly different lines from those shown in the robed figures of apostles of the fifteenth century.

Consider, now, a very different work, the painting of a man far less uniformly praised than is Sargent. The paintings of Albert Moore always attract, because he refuses to paint incidents, to tell stories, to strive for the expression of feelings fully expressible only in words. He is a painter of lovely things, visible and tangible things; and if the visible thing be also a living and moving thing, then he knows how to select one instant in the long continued series of movements, and so to paint not a happening but a condition. Plate XLVI[1] gives his little picture, Waiting to Cross; three girls standing at the river bank and waiting for the ferry-boat. As the artist has wished to make his picture very beautiful, so he has been compelled to avoid modern female dress, and as he did not paint the dress of his day he was left free to compose a costume. It is obvious that both Greek and Roman arrangements of drapery had been considered when those folds were cast,

[1] Picture exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in London, 1888; twenty-six inches high: Oil on canvas. By Albert Joseph Moore (1841–1893). Pupil of his father; resided in London.

and yet it cannot be said that the girls are draped in strict accordance with any historical costume. The chances are that a tunic was cut out and sewed up, and that a great square cloak like a Paludamentum was improvised; it may be that even three girls were draped in this way and were set moving together, before the lines of this picture were determined. The figures are painted in colours more decided than are those of the landscape, which seems gray by contrast, and indeed Moore was too fond of the pale tints to be a colourist; but our business now is with the form, and it seems that modern artists have not painted draped men and women more gracefully and in a more refined way than this painter. To find other pictures as attractive in the way of figure subject it is perhaps necessary to choose the nude, but our modern nudes are apt to be a little perfunctory, with figures posed, as it were, and a general air of not being real people. Albert Moore himself has made as good a showing as any modern artist in treating the nude, using it always

in connection with highly decorative composition.

Let us consider the admirable realistic studies made by certain Frenchmen, in their fields and on their sea-beach. Augustin Feyen-Perrin showed at the great exhibition of 1878 an admirable picture, now in the Luxembourg, and to be seen by all the world. It is reproduced in Plate XLVII.[1] The foreground is occupied by the front rank of a long procession. Girls and men carrying their catch, and the bulky implements of their industry, are coming up the beach, now that the tide has turned and the hour of work has passed. Far into the distance this column tapers away; there may be 150 people in it, and the girls in the front rank are tall and well set up figures of women with close-fitting *jupes*, scanty in the amount of material, and with long aprons. Shawls covering the shoulders are crossed at the breast, and tied behind.

[1] Retour de la Pêche aux Huitres par les Grandes Marées: Oil on canvas, six feet eight inches long: exhibited at the great exhibition of 1878. By François Nicolas Augustin Feyen-Perrin (1826–1888); born in Alsace, studied and resided in Paris.

Large and loose sabots are the obvious footgear for paddling in wet sand and the pools among the rocks, and handkerchiefs tied fast are the favourite head-dress. Here is a costume which may be treated artistically; and subjects like this in the hands of a person of greater concentration and more pervading force than was Feyen-Perrin may develop into really stately compositions. Even the picture in question has something of antique dignity; although it is perhaps too obviously conventionalized into that very result. As an instance of what is possible in this direction to a more realistic painter, take the picture by Antoine Vollon, shown in Plate XLVIII.[1] There is but one figure in it; and this picture is chosen because it seems desirable to insist upon the conception and the drawing of that figure. It is the ideal of vigorous and robust womanhood, and the probabilities are strong that the artist has painted with fidelity an exceptionally well made fish-

[1] Femme du Pollet, à Dieppe. Salon of 1876. It was exhibited in the great exhibition of 1878. By Antoine Vollon (b. 1833).

Plate XLVII.—RETOUR DE LA PÊCHE AUX HUÎTRES; FEYEN-PERRIN.

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Plate XLVIII.—FEMME DU POLLET; ANTOINE VOLLON.

woman of the Normandy coast. Now Dieppe is a well policed modern town, as *bourgeois* as possible, but its suburb Le Pollet is (or was, fifteen years ago) an astonishing survival of simple old manners and customs. As in a remote town of Flanders or Brabant, the women sit spinning in the street, or busy themselves with the nets of the fishermen which must be dried and mended. And this lusty fishwoman with huge empty basket, going to her toil of *la petite pêche*, is a truthful embodiment of sea-board Normandy. There are other and more ideal ways of rendering the human figure in action, and strangely enough it is the greatest of all painters of the French peasant, Jean François Millet, who has put his figures into landscape with a more perfect sense of their relation to the circumstances around them than any one else whom it is easy to name. His two figures in the painting and in the better known etching, Going to Work (Allant Travailler) a young man and a young woman walking across the fields together;

the bending figures in The Gleaners; the knitting woman standing under a tree, in a fine and rare etching known to collectors as The Great Shepherdess, are all marked by a repose like that of the hills and trees.

The noble picture generally called The Gleaners shows this singular grace of perfectly realized figures of independent interest, harmonizing perfectly with noble landscape, and the whole painting is fine in colour as in linear composition. This picture is given in Plate XLIX[1] and it deserves inclusion also in Chapter IX, because of the refined sentiment expressed in the patient gathering of a few ears of wheat by the poor, while the abundant harvest is in evidence beyond,—amid loaded wagons, labouring harvesters, and huge stacks of sheaves. This power of appeal was visible enough when it was first exhibited, for it raised a storm of denunciation and applause. It was attacked as socialistic and

[1] Les Glaneuses: Oil on canvas, five feet three inches long, in the Louvre Museum. This picture, bought for 2,000 francs, was afterwards sold for 300,000 francs and bequeathed to the French Nation: by Jean François Millet (1814–1875).

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Plate XLIX.—LES GLANEUSES; J. F. MILLET.

Plate L.—LA BERGÈRE; J. B. MILLET.

revolutionary, even as it was praised for its pity and its lofty charity. In a curious way the wood-engraving of the painter's brother, J. B. Millet, is found to preserve some of the loftiest qualities of the work of this great man, and in Plate L[1] is given one of these woodcuts. The stately effect producible by simple means can hardly be better shown. Extreme uniformity of surface in heavy stuffs which fall without minute folds, and in the slightly rendered haycock, the distant, slightly rising fields; extreme simplicity of attitude not complicated by any decided expression of emotion; a linear composition which can be analyzed most readily and which resolves itself into a principal upright mass in the figure of the girl, based sufficiently on both sides and echoed in the distant avenue of trees, go to make up one of the most abstract works of art of modern times.

A complete contrast to such a design is the immediate *actualité* of De Neuville's.

[1] Called by Sensier "La Bergère": Drawn on wood by Jean François Millet (1814–1875) engraved by J. B. Millet, eight and one half inches by ten and three fourths inches.

picture of the Flag of Truce (Plate LI).[1] Such pictures were produced by scores after the close of the disastrous war, and the French painters showed singular good taste and judgment in confining their subjects so very commonly to slight incidents of daily occurrence, expressive of neither defeat nor victory—the daily routine of warfare on a great scale. A German officer, decorated with the iron cross and followed by his orderly (an Uhlan) bearing the white flag, has pulled up his horse, and sits waiting while the subaltern in charge of the French post is studying the direction of the letter. A non-commissioned officer with rifle in hand and a bugler are close behind their officer, and five other infantry soldiers are in sight. Everything is wet and wintry—it is the dismal time of January and February, 1871.

[1] Communication aux Avant Postes: Oil on canvas: by Alphonse Marie Adolphe de Neuville (1836–1885); born and resided in France, largely self-taught.

Plate LI.—COMMUNICATION AUX AVANT-POSTES, DE NEUVILLE.

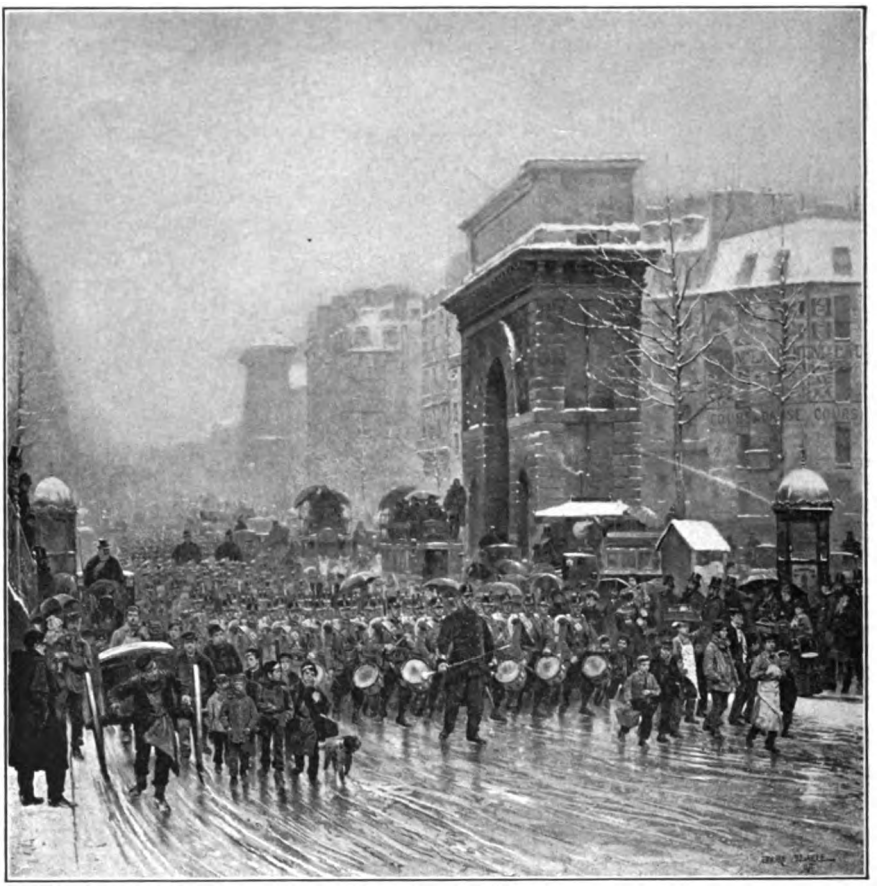

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Plate LII.—LE RÉGIMENT QUI PASSE; DETAILLE.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RECENT ART: COLOUR AND LIGHT AND SHADE

LET us take the painter, for a moment, as the representative of the graphic arts and of all artists who deal with them. When the painter looks at hills and trees or at cattle or at clothed men and women, he sees a great deal which the person of untrained eye and unpracticed powers of observation fails to see. He sees facts of construction and beauties of resulting form, and they delight him. He sees soft roundings of surface, and, in contrast with those, abrupt changes of surface. He sees extraordinary subtleties of gradation in light and in colour, caused partly by these changes in the surface and partly by the actual hue of the thing, its green or yellowish brown or rosy gray. In other words, the artist's eye gives him cognizance of a whole world of interesting facts con-

cerning visible objects which it is his business to render in painting in such a way that the non-artistic world will find something attractive and instructive in it and, of course, that his fellows of the artistic world shall enjoy and commend his work. Now, the differences between painters are as great as the differences between other men, and one man will see form almost to the exclusion of other matters, so heartily does he enjoy form. In the last chapter there was some attempt made to show what was meant by "form" in this sense. But there are also many painters who see more plainly or, at all events, who notice more intently, the gradations of light and of colour which, though they result in part from form, are yet independent of it from the artist's point of view. For consider how inevitable it is that a painter should sometimes love and remember accurately certain passages of tone from stronger to weaker, from darker to lighter, from deeper to paler, and the rest, and yet when he comes to paint, shall forget the exact

sequence of those tones in the natural aspect of the thing which he has studied.

"Forget the exact sequence." Not that the artist's mind is capable of forgetting it altogether, but that it may easily be mistaken by such a mind, the memory giving the mental image strong and clear and positive as regards the facts of the gradation themselves, but failing to record exactly the succession of tones or of tints on the hillside or the piece of drapery. The result of the painting or of the elaborately wrought-up drawing of such an artist will be, then, bad in drawing; that is to say, he will have missed the essentials of the visible facts which record the structure and form of the object he represents. And yet the drawing or painting, erroneous as here explained, may be full of charm and grace, with the loveliest gradation of light and shade, and the loveliest play of colour.

We become familiar with these degrees of success in the work of our younger artists, as we watch their growth in strength and in the unity of their achievements.

Here will be a drawing in which the gray sky with mottled clouds is exquisitely rendered, but it will be noticed that it seems more solid than the hill above which this formation is spread out. Here will be a drawing of a clump of trees in the near foreground, exquisite in character, the growth of each tree carefully marked so that you can "botanize" the plants almost as if you had them in your dooryard, but the middle distance will be filled with hills which do not recede—which come close up to the trees so that these will seem pasted against them. Here will be a half dozen of draped human figures so arranged in a picture that we understand what they are intended to be doing; but also giving no real impression of the action going on—so huddled is the group, so confused the action of each figure, so inadequate the disposition of the personages represented—the *bonshommes*, as the French call them. This last named defect is very common in modern sculpture, in groups of statues arranged in pediments or on pedestals between the windows of great

buildings, and in bas-relief. It was noticeable in that famous Naval Arch which was put up in New York in 1899; for the sculptors' work in colossal and in life-size figures was very praiseworthy in the modelling of separate figures and in the treatment of face and gesture, while no such excellence could be ascribed to the grouping. It was evident that the terrible haste in which the work had to be carried out hurt each sculptor the most in the place where he was weakest, and assuredly modern sculpture is least strong in the matter of dignified, stately and expressive groups.

Returning to the graphic arts, the eye is much more likely to be accustomed to notice aright the forms and movements of humanity than to notice the forms of inanimate nature or even the forms of the lower animals. Therefore if a painting of men and women contains notably unsuccessful drawing, it will require great splendour of colour and interest of light and shade to possess any influence among the artists—to gain any reputation. There may

be a moment's interest felt by a crowd of gallery-haunters in the subject of the work, but this interest soon flags and disappears; and the steady appreciation that comes of the approval of the artists, gradually spreading downward to the community, will never be given to that work of art unless, as has been said, it has other great merits to make up for its inadequate drawing. In landscape, however, in the drawing of cattle and the like, there is less observation of this sort, and it follows from this fact that the ordinary spectator hardly knows what is meant when he is told that a given picture of landscape is badly drawn or contains bad drawing. In connection with this there is another definition of the word "drawing" which may be noted—the definition which claims that drawing is simply the putting of things into their right places. The more one thinks of such a definition as that, the more satisfactory does it seem; especially in the matter of landscape. Imagine a landscape painter of some considerable ability and of long practice, sitting in

the field with three pupils of different stages of advancement or of different degrees of ability; he will say of one of them that A. B. draws always rightly—by which he means that with almost infallible eye and hand the pupil puts his mass of green foliage (which to him is a surface of green colour with certain gradations in it which are not green) into just the right place on the sheet of paper or the square of canvas; and that the pupil does this, whether we are considering the exact facts of the natural scene which he is trying to render or the composition which he is trying to make from it. The pupil may do these two different things alternately; one drawing may be a faithful copy of an interesting piece of scenery, another may be a deliberate forsaking of facts before him that he may produce a certain effect which he has seen—which he has seen dimly in his mind's eye—of which he is in search. To say, then, that an artist draws well in landscape is very nearly equivalent to saying that he puts the things in their right places. But this

putting of the things in their right places can only come of a very clear insight into the true nature of the things themselves. How can the pupil hope to put that patch of green, which stands for an apple-tree, into its right place in his drawing, until he has appreciated to the full the shape, character, blueness, grayness of the clump of green trees? Is it not clear that he will fail to place it aright if he does not see it aright in its relation to the things about it? For note that no green tree looks the same to the student who sees it among other green trees, and to the student who might see it with a screen behind it, or with the other trees cut down and nothing for its background but a distant, rocky hill. The green tree is what it is to the painter, in great measure, because of the neighbourhood of the other green trees; and that is true as to outline, mass, light-and-shade, colour, each by itself, and all together. The good drawing which we have assumed to be the gift of certain students of landscape comes in large part of the clearness of vision (both bodily

and mental) which gives to the brain of the student that tree in its true relation to the other trees near. In brief, the artist cannot hope to draw landscape well unless he also perceives, at least, the light-and-shade which invests each part of the landscape, and that in relation to the light and shade of every other part.

It seems necessary to limit this last statement to light and shade because this is, after all, what the greater number of modern painters are in search of. It is of light and shade that expression is made up, that good drawing of body and limbs is made up. It is by this that weight, or movement, is expressed. The great French school cares quite infinitely for vigour of light and shade, for the relative strength of darks and lights, the transitions of darks and lights, the gradations from darker to lighter on hillside, on cloud, on draperies—these are the things which nine-tenths of the modern painters seek for and enjoy. It is easy to see how closely they are connected with the study of form, and how completely the

artist who sees form the most clearly and enjoys it the most may be also a master of light and shade. A cottage on a hillside can be put in its place, and made to look real, its thatched roof of one and its stone walls of another character, another surface; and so the hill can be made to look solid and heavy, and its very stratification explained, by means of light and shade. And, if that light and shade be invested with certain hues,—if the grays of the house wall are ruddy, and those of the hillside yellowish passing into orange brown, the form may be as well expressed, while the picture takes on the appearance of a work in colour. Form can only be rendered by means of light and shade; though it may be a coloured light and shade. In a given work, the light and shade may fail to express form perfectly, or, again, form may be well suggested by a light and shade which is far from faultless and far from beautiful; yet are the two pursuits one and the same to the painter in oil or water-colour, the draughtsman, the etcher.

It is very different when the question is that of colour. Colour loved for its own sake, and because the artist enjoys it heartily, is not a common subject of study among modern painters. When it is so studied it takes precedence, very readily, of all other forms of thought. Your cottage (to recall the example given in the last paragraph) may be a little less real, your hill a little less solid, if, as you work at that part of the picture, the lovely colouring of it has been acting strongly upon you. The artist can never reproduce *the whole* of nature; he must choose. If colour is what strikes him the most forcibly, he will choose colour as his theme. Whether the beauty of colour in the real objects has been too great for him to reproduce, or whether it is only a hint of great possibilities that he has received from nature, in either case his spirit is awake to the most spiritual of visible things, and to get colour he will sacrifice, or neglect, or modify whatever else is in his work.

Plate LII[1] reproduces a large picture by Édouard Detaille, representing the Boulevard Saint-Martin, as it looked thirty years ago to one who should stand, on a drizzling winter day, 150 feet nearly east of the triumphal arch of Louis XIV; the Porte Saint-Martin. On its right is seen the rounding corner as the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin goes off to the northward, and the triumphal arch itself stands boldly out in the middle of the picture. The high towerlike building in the distance is the Porte Saint-Denis. This and the tall houses are half seen through fog, and are less and less plainly seen as they recede, and as the wall of fog grows thicker. A regiment of infantry is coming by, marching eastward, and this gives the name to the picture, and a living interest to it for that very large class of people who go to a painting as to a story-book. There can be no doubt that what the painter himself cared for was the truly Turnerian effect of the tall buildings

[1] Le Régiment qui passe: Oil on canvas, exhibited in 1875. Jean Baptiste Édouard Detaille, born in Paris 1848, pupil of Meissonier.

emerging dimly through the thickening vapour. Detaille is a military painter and he enjoyed, in a way, his tall drum-major and his long rank of drummers with the half seen, ordered ranks behind, and the mounted officers. All this he liked, and perhaps he enjoyed as fully the children, the errand boys of all sorts, the crowd of *gamins* who are delighted with their own march in front of the band, and even the *bourgeois* along the sidewalk who stop and look intently at the military show. But again the picture itself declares for him that he cared still more for the effects of cloud and smoke, for the dimness, the slow gradations, the absence of strong contrast, the whole scenery of the gray, dismal winter day. There is unfailing charm in it: the soft gradations passing into evanescence, the hard and flat surfaces as of masonry all taking on the look of something unreal, and assuming new tints which they did not have by the light of a sunny day. And the painting of such effects, whether accurately, or with a

freely working fancy, is very nearly what we call Impressionism. But as Detaille is past master in a school which deals in facts, and a school which eschews free abandonment of the painter to his colour-sense, let us consider the work of a man who was not so restrained.

Plate LIII[1] gives the famous picture by J. M. W. Turner, called Rain, Steam and Speed. This picture, one of Turner's latest time, followed other paintings of very similar quality, such as those entitled in the Catalogues "Snow Storm, Steamer off Harbour's Mouth making Signals," and "Rockets and Blue Lights to warn Steamboats off of Shallow Water," and (with more pretension to definite subject) "Shade and Darkness—the Evening of the Deluge." Turner, in his later time, was painting with entire deliberation the subjects which he really cared the most about, subjects of mist and

[1] Rain, Steam and Speed—The Great Western Railway: Oil on canvas. A large picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844; now in the National Gallery. By J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851); born and lived in London.

Plate LIII.—RAIN, STEAM AND SPEED; J. M. W. TURNER.

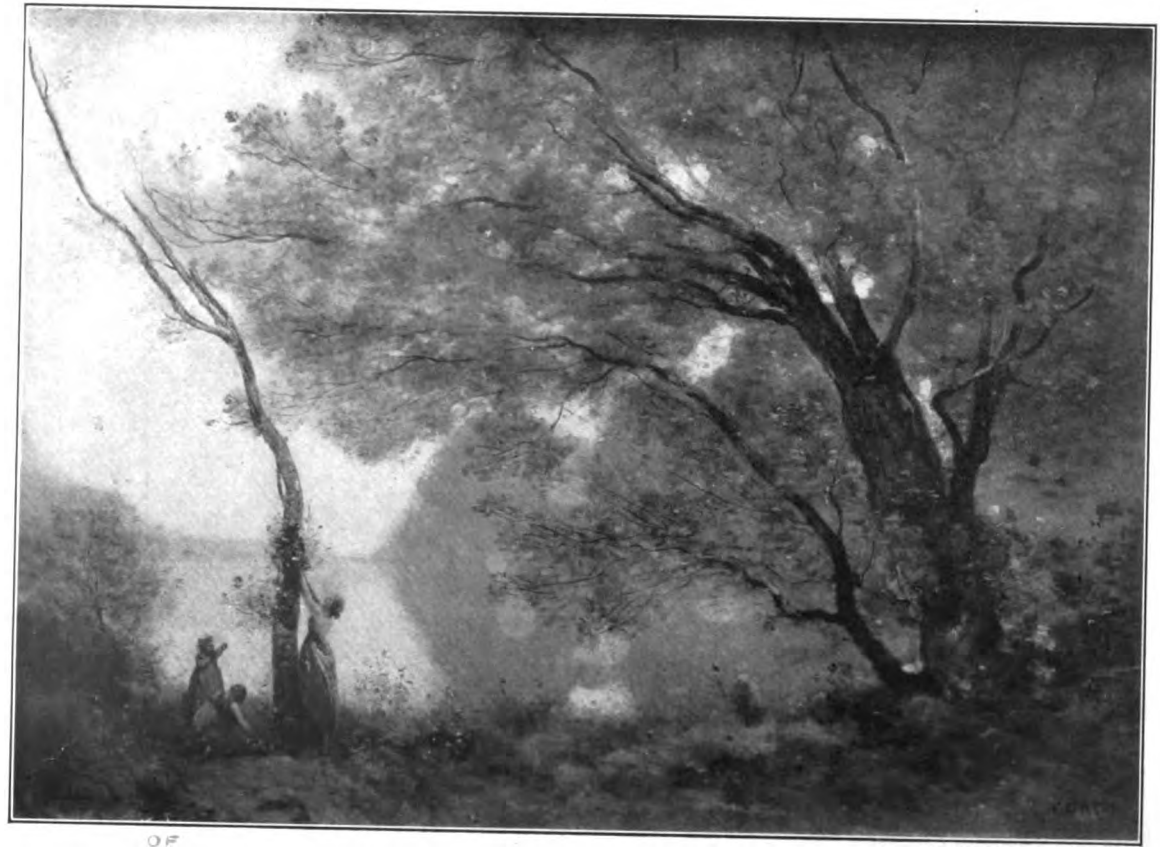

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Plate LIV.—PAYSAGE; COROT.

haze, fog and steam; and of light and shade as modified by these obscuring films and envelopments, or even as created by them. So the painting of the train of the Great Western Railway is undertaken and carried out without any reference to the detailed facts of the English locomotive and train of 1843. The artist has sought to get an impression of rapid motion by the only means in which it can be got, by suggesting it, by putting the train alone in the middle of the picture upon the high and detached viaduct and evidently on its journey, while behind it stream out the mingled vapours of the rainy day and of the flying train. It is evident that the attractiveness of such a picture must lie in its chiaroscuro or in its colour, or both. The subject hardly commends itself to brilliancy of colour; it is the subtle gradation of light and shade which promises to be the most important, here: and yet this painting is wonderful in its coloration. It is one of the great achievements of modern Impressionism, in its narrow and exact sense.

If, now, we consider Plate LIV[1], a noble painting by Corot in the Louvre, we find ourselves coming very near to "nature as seen through a temperament," which phrase, though not an adequate definition of "art," as it was intended to be, describes certain pictures well enough. We find a positive refusal on the part of the artist to give us any such minute details of tree and foreground shrubbery as would be granted to the ordinary human eye at such a distance from the vegetation. Corot has given in the foliage what he cared for, its subdued green as seen by twilight, carried far towards a gray uniformity of colour; and the all embracing, all covering cloud which might come of it if studied from a very individual point of view. The trees seem to him not made up of partly detached branches, each one having its own mission in life and claiming separate attention, but a rounded

[1] Paysage: In oil on canvas, three feet long. Formerly in the Palace of Fontainebleau, now in the Museum of the Louvre. By Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (1799–1875); resided and worked principally at Fontainebleau.

mass, prettily broken up at the outside, penetrated as it were and made more attractive by certain caverns of deeper gloom —soft and floating, even cloudlike,—but still a mass, and not a group of leaves or twigs or branches. The well-known tradition is that Corot had learned to love the effects of early dawn ; that he went into the forest of Fontainebleau before sunrise, day after day, and, setting up his easel in the twilight, prepared, indeed, not to paint what offered in the way of solid form, but what might suggest itself to his mind in the contemplation of that solid form. He may be thought to have painted the spirit of trees: or rather, the spirit of summer foliage. But it is hardly worth while to look as closely at the question as that—the real truth of the matter is that he painted a beautiful oblong panel, a most exquisite jewel of art, accepting for his composition such suggestions as Nature might have offered him on certain consecutive early mornings.

Plate LV[1] is one of two large and famous pictures by Troyon; well known to students of French painting. This one, Cattle Returning to the Farmyard, is one of the great achievements of modern landscape art, and one of the most important attempts to associate cattle with landscape, the whole on a large scale and with great elaboration of detail. Troyon is not exactly a colourist in the loftiest sense; the charm of the rainbow is not quite felt by him or by those who study his works, but he is a great master of the softer gradations, of the cooler and paler tones, of all that modification of light and shade which the skilled manipulator of pigments will produce, even though colour in the strictest sense is not his object in life.

This is one of the noblest landscapes in the world. So much is got from a quiet scene in pastoral country—from rounded masses of common trees of our fields, from skillfully modelled heights and depths of ground, the little hill over which pass the

[1] The Return to the Farmyard: Oil on canvas, eight feet long. Exhibited in 1859; now in the Museum of the Louvre. By Constant Troyon (1810-1865); resided in and near Paris.

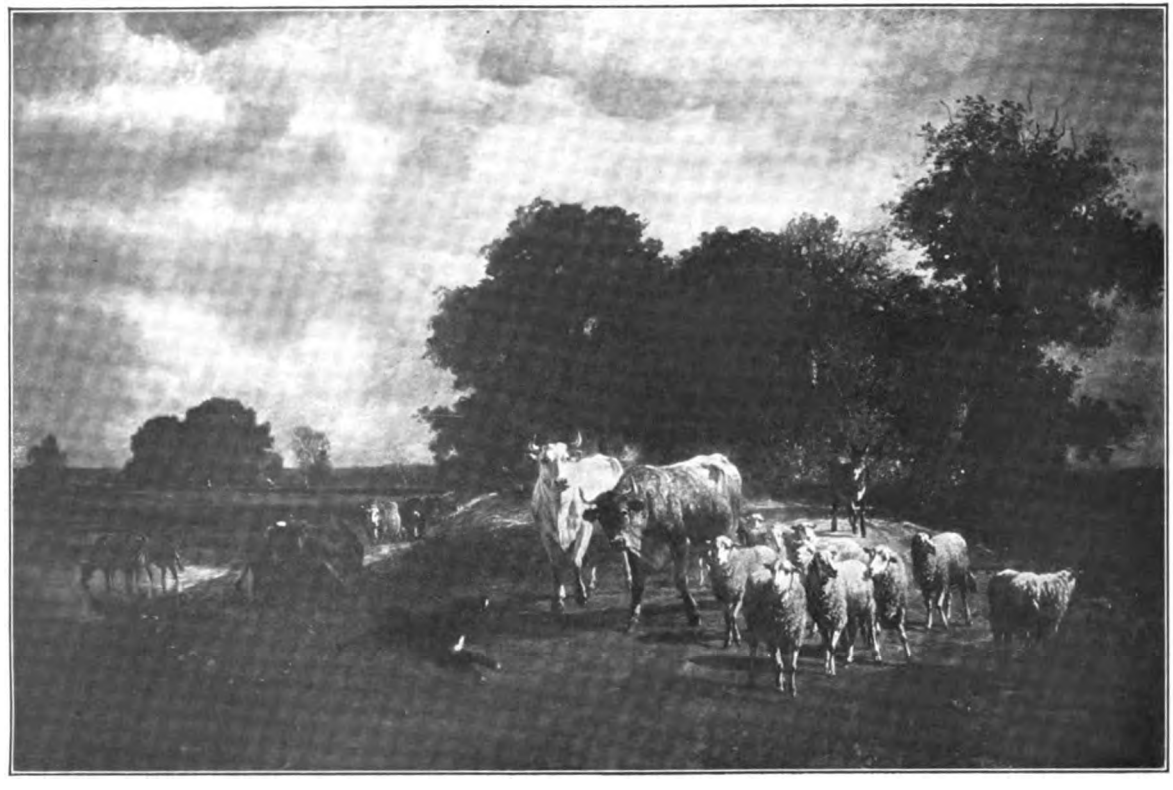
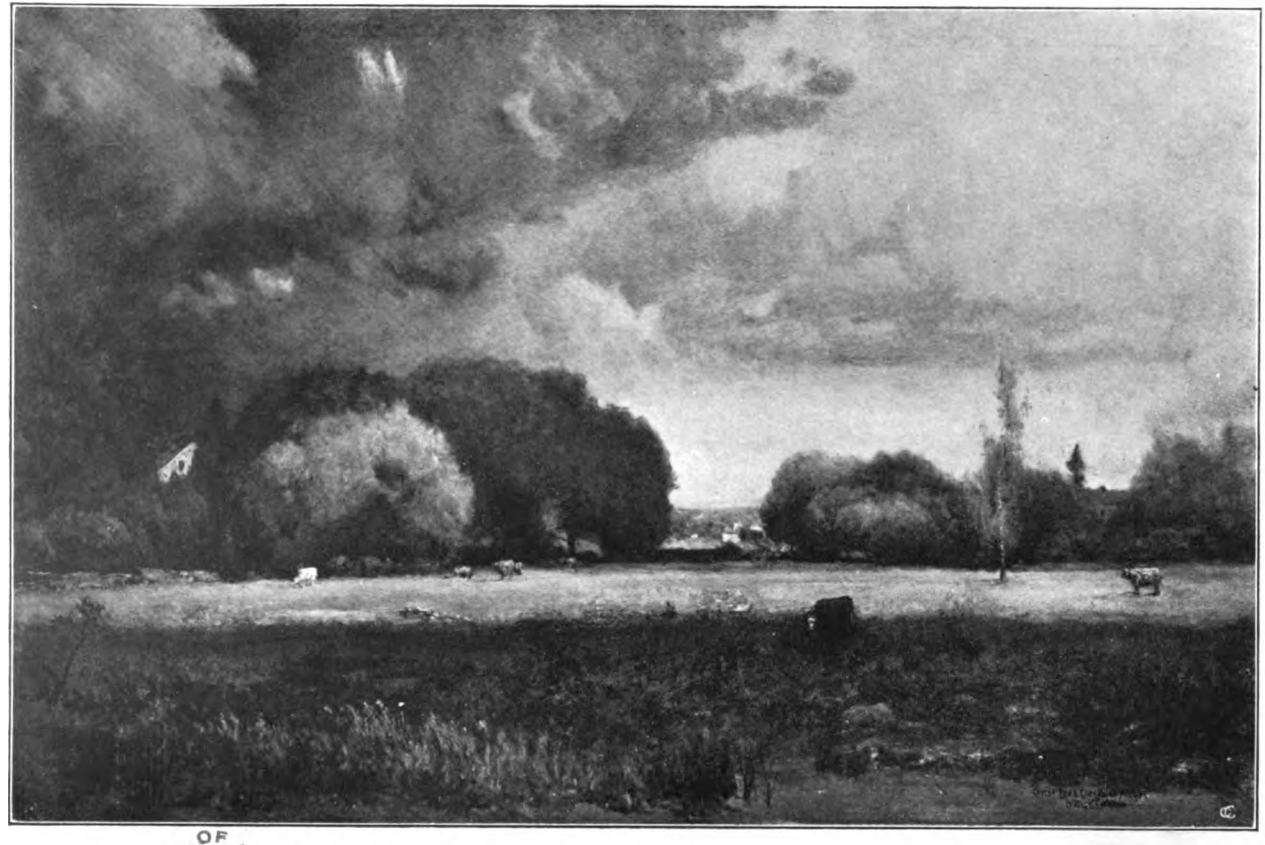


Plate LV.—LE RETOUR À LA FERME; TROYON.



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*From a Copley Print, Copyright 1899 by Curtis & Cameron, Publishers, Boston.*

**Plate LVI.—MEDFIELD MEADOWS; GEORGE INNESS.**

shadows of the cattle and the sheep thrown long by the setting sun, the hollow to the left along which cattle are coming and which holds a still pond of water at the bottom, the cloudy sky with no particular emphasis laid upon the cloud structure—simply a gray firmament of every day! The achievement has been to get so much beauty and significance out of these simple materials. It is possible to imagine a more luminous gray sky than this, and the vegetation has not quite the magical charm of a Corot; but balanced excellence, no part driving another into comparative neglect, no part insisting upon its own predominance,—that is the special characteristic of this noble picture. Strongly cast shadows have never been more skillfully managed in painting. This is a feature which is generally avoided by great masters of composition whether in mass or in colour; shadows are unknown to purely decorative work, and it is with reserve that they can be accepted in landscape; but here the low sun throws on the ground, beyond each

creature's feet, the strong dark shadow much longer than his own height and length.

There may be fancied a resemblance between the work of George Inness, the American artist, and that of Troyon. There is the same strong leaning toward effects got from the simplest material directed in the simplest way by means of straightforward painting, and if the American fills his sky with more enchanting colour—as of sunset or of rain-cloud passing away—even this does not quite change the general character of his work. Plate LVI,[1] Medfield Meadows, is a more elaborately composed piece of work than the great Troyon. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the composition counts for more in the work as we see it. Certainly it is hard to imagine a more perfect success from simply rounded masses of trees below, from sky above, and these held together by strong horizontal bars of deep shade in the fore-

[1] Medfield Meadows: Oil on canvas, forty-five inches long. By George Inness (1825–1894); lived in New Jersey and Massachusetts.

ground, and bright, sunlit grass in the middle distance.

But for American landscape of reserved dignity of coloured light and shade, treated as the chief purpose of the picture, there is no artist quite the equal of Homer Martin. His picture, shown in Plate LVII,[1] is a perfectly good instance of the character of his later work. As for the name View on the Seine, it is quite easy to understand Mrs. Martin's rejection of that title, in the biography of her husband, because indeed his latest pictures were never pictures of places anywhere. His method of work was well known to those who watched him much. He would have, on one leaf of a sketch-book, a group of slender, spindling trees like the one in the picture before us, or perhaps smaller; and he would have on another page something like that distant peep of the town seen two miles away, with still water

[1] Picture called View on the Seine and, by the artist's family, The Harp of the Winds: Oil on canvas. Painted in Normandy in 1882; now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. By Homer Dodge Martin (1836–1897); resided in New York City.

between us and it. That would be all, perhaps; and from such material he would build up his picture. The group of slender trees with nearly parallel straight trunks he would wish to emphasize and insist upon, and the still water would be brought in front of the shore where those trees stand in order that they might reflect themselves in it. Then, as the clump of trees was too narrow and unimportant for these changed conditions, he would add two or three trees, or perhaps merely the one on the right, which leans a little out from the rest and gives the group a charm of wonderful daring, as if it were about to break away from its rigidity. Then the great solid clump of green on the left would be put in, with the bank of rock and earth below it to give it consistency, to give it firmness and the look of reality, and the low hill would be drawn out carefully on either side of the clump of trees, leaving the white houses of the town well in relief and enclosing the horizon on the right. To fill the whole background, then, with lovely gradations of bluish-gray

By Courtesy of William Macbeth.

Plate LVII.—VIEW ON THE SEINE; HOMER D. MARTIN.

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Plate LVIII.—J'Y ÉTAIS; FLORENT WILLEMS.

representing or standing for thin clouds, and the foreground with the reflected liquidity of the pictured water, was an easy task for that practiced hand, which, even when the eye-sight which had directed it was failing, found its way to colour-box and then to canvas with a hardly diminished truth and force.

It is commonly in landscape painting that whatever love of colour there may be in modern times takes refuge. If a person naturally drawn to the aspects of nature, whether in simple sunshiny June weather, or in tempest and with surroundings of wilder country, give himself up hourly to this occupation, he will find nearly always his sense of the colour harmonies about him growing stronger and dominating his other sense of what is fine. The contrary is equally true, namely, that the person already gifted with a strong sense of colour will, in questions concerning art, devote himself to landscape in most cases, for in modern times it is not the buildings of the city nor the dresses of the

citizens which can help him to the charm and the glory of colour for which he longs.

There have been several allusions to Impressionism; and it is in connection with these matters of colour and chiaroscuro that the art of that school must always be considered. Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, those men and their allies draw intelligently—Manet was a wonderful draughtsman of the human figure in repose, and in slow or restrained action—but the peculiarity of their work is in its coloured light. An instance of their practice was given in a New York gallery, about 1900; a number of pictures of Rouen Cathedral by Monet; all of the same size, and taken from the same point of view. They were not small studies, but exhibition pieces in every sense. One showed the church as it looked under warm sunset light—one as it stood under the noonday sun—it is not necessary to continue the enumeration; obviously the word to the spectator is this: "Things are as they look; the traceried spire is one thing when seen by the white light of noon,

a very different thing when seen by chill dawn, or by rosy twilight, or by electric light from the square below." So when Besnard made people laugh by his purple horses coming up out of fiery red water, his purpose was partly pedagogic (as who should say, let me tell you something you didn't know); and partly experimental (to see what were really the facts of sunset light on the smooth and wet hide of a bay horse): but wholly painter-like—a purpose conceived and developed in love of artistic interpretation of nature.

This method is called Impressionism because its advocates wish to avow their purpose of painting effects, not facts: the *impression* which nature makes on them, not known or ascertainable truths of structure. The majority of their canvases are landscapes: and in all of them the true landscape sense—the feeling of coloured objects taking on temporary, often changing, appearances under changing light,—is the main theme. This constant watching of the effects of light and colour, as actually

seen out of doors, has given to the men of this school the appellative which they seem to prefer: Les pleinairistes.

But no recent impressionism can exceed the later work of J. M. W. Turner; and the close connection between the earlier English and the later French art of this spirit is seen in this incident. The editor of *The Portfolio*, soon after its establishment in London, invited a number of French etchers to examine the National Gallery, with a view to reproducing certain pictures there. This must have been about 1873: and Leopold Flameng, Bracquemond, Lalanne, Rajon, Veyrassat and others, the best etchers alive, one or two exceptional spirits being excepted, came to London to work. And the verifiable story is told, that they all insisted on reproducing the late Turners, those studies of smoke and cloud and steam at which the English critics were laughing. Well, it is in those years that the French painters named above as the chief impressionists, were making sure of their position in art. What the colourists in

France were dreaming and doing, the French etchers found thought-out and done in the Turner paintings of 1840 to 1844.

# CHAPTER IX

## RECENT ART: SENTIMENT AND RECORD

It is pointed out in many passages of these later chapters that the chief peculiarity of recent picture-making is in the continual attempt to express sentiment. This is sometimes seen in the recording of incidents, historical or imaginary; and sometimes in the presentation of persons engaged in some mutual action and counteraction, which the picture itself may explain fully, or which remains partly unexplained. The requirement is always that some interest shall be excited by other than artistic qualities in the picture. In the case of illustration to a book the demand is, of course, that the incidents given in the text be related over again in the picture. The artist seeks to add something of his own; he decides upon the costume which his figures ought to wear and on the look of the countryside or the city street which

serves as their setting—their background. Then, if his mind is full of material, he goes on elaborating the costume (say) with studied details of embroidery and plume, and he adds landscape, or perhaps architectural detail or effects of sunshine and shadow on house fronts. This he does for his own delight, because few of the readers of the book in hand will follow him there. So we have illustrators of both kinds; or at least illustrations of both kinds. Cruikshank's famous Fagin in the condemned cell, or Sykes on the house-top, have few details. In such a case, either the subject does not allow of them or the required intensity would be marred by their presence. But the illustrations of Shakespeare by Gordon Brown, Edwin A. Abbey, and Eduard Grützner are full of details—details of costume, of armour, of surroundings; and the work of the great Adolf Menzel is made up entirely of details most minutely studied, however boldly drawn. There are pictures by thousands which are not in books, which are developed upon six foot canvases, which

are as completely illustration as the small black and white squares in books. Sometimes these large pictures illustrate definite passages in poems or romances of the day; but sometimes, again, they deal with incident which has not found its way into print, at least as far as the observer will be apt to follow the artist.

Plate LVIII[1] is as good an instance of this, as we are likely to find. Florent Willems is a Belgian painter of celebrity, whose busy life corresponds with the second half of the nineteenth century. His picture, the title of which may be rendered "I was There" represents a scene in 1650 or thereabout, in which a young lady is showing to a gentleman in buff coat and with a long sword the picture of a vigorous sea-fight—just such a picture as the Dutchmen of that time were painting, just such a picture as Philippe de Champaigne might have put upon canvas. It seems to be the lady's intention to tell her friend something about

[1] J'y Étais: Picture on canvas in oil, exhibited about 1857 by Florent Willems; born at Liège, Belgium, in 1823; has resided at Paris.

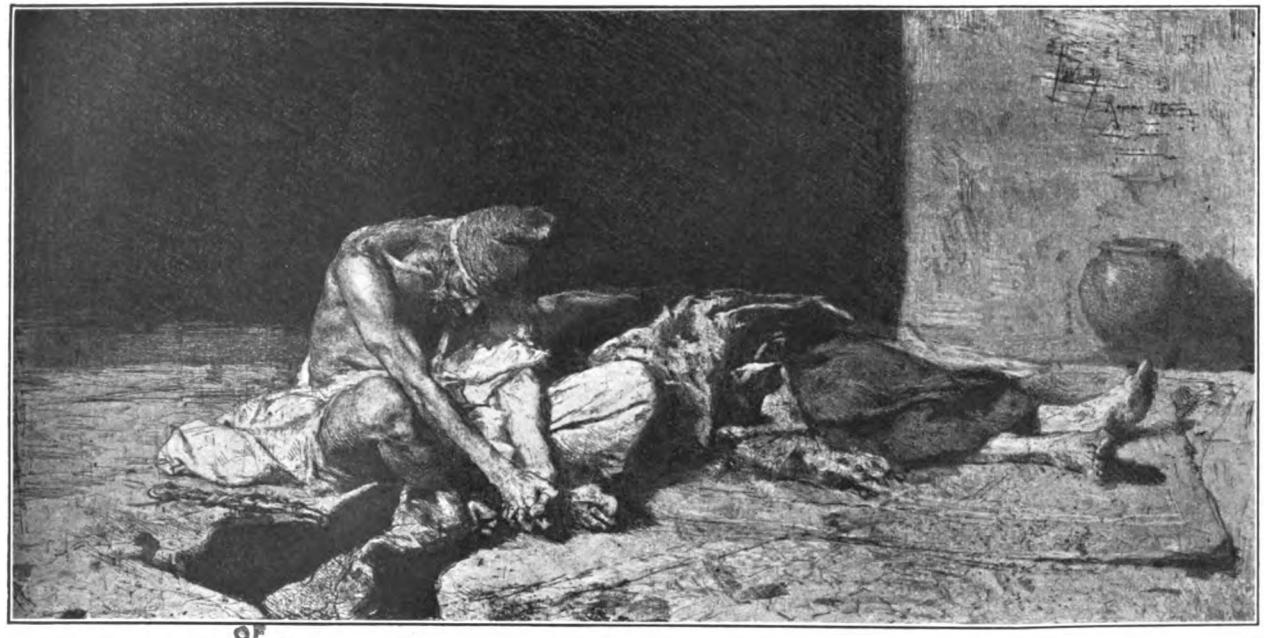

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Plate LIX.—ARABE VEILLANT LE CORPS DE SON AMI; FORTUNY.

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Plate LX.—FALSTAFF'S RAGGED RECRUITS; H. S. MARKS.

the event described in the picture. But the old warrior says simply: "Well, I was there"; and his remark may serve for more than the title of the painting. It may serve very well as an instance of the modern popular way of looking on the modern popular picture. It is a natural way enough. This old soldier is not by training or habit of mind a lover of thought expressed in form or in light and shade, nor is he a connoisseur in any sense of the word. He is interested only in identifying the historical incident of which he formed a part. And for the twentieth century people who look at the picture by Willems in which are contained the incident and the other picture, it is only to be said that they also are afforded a simple and ready means of feeling the titillation of a pleasant enthusiasm. It is even capable of bringing tears into the eyes of the person who finds himself in the proper mood of mind. Apart from this the picture is meritorious. All of Willems' work is solid and serious, firmly painted, of sufficient merit in chiaroscuro and in

colour, and he is rather celebrated as a draughtsman even in a world of good draughtsmen.

The Spanish painters of the half Parisian school of the mid-nineteenth century have left much striking work behind them, and their most able picture-maker was assuredly Mariano Fortuny. His etchings, very much elaborated, carried far, not at all the slight studies and impressions which some artists think should be the limit of an etcher's ambition, seem to be more certain to survive in our memories than his paintings. Plate LIX,[1] one of many studies made in Algeria and Morocco, may be entitled, Moor Watching his Dead Friend. It is one of the most impressive of these studies in black and white, in which the sentiment and the artistic handling are closely akin.

Plate LX[2] is a humorous composition by a very celebrated English artist, a man

[1] Arabe Veillant le corps de son Ami, original etching; by Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874); born in Spain, lived in France and in Rome.

[2] "Falstaff's Own," or, more properly, Falstaff's Ragged Recruits: Oil on canvas. Exhibited 1867; by Henry Stacy Marks (1829–1898).

of whom the art dictionaries and the books of essays treat continually. Nobody claims for Henry Stacy Marks any very lofty artistic position. He was an unusually good draughtsman for a man of the English school and taught in England, but his work is not claimed to possess much charm —much fascination for the lover of painting for its own sake. It showed a strong sense of the fun that was to be found in the outer world, and not merely in the world of human life, but in the life of birds and beasts as well; and some of his paintings remind one even of Du Maurier and the pages of *Punch*, for their frank treatment of the flying creatures as personages capable of feeling as well as conveying a sense of the humorous. In the picture before us we have a presentation of that famous body of recruits which Sir John Falstaff raised by the simple process of allowing good men to buy themselves free of his "press" and enrolling "such scarecrows" as were willing enough to take service. He is on the road towards Cov-

entry, but we know that he will not "march through" that town.[1] The reader of this and the other plays in which are recorded the doings of Falstaff and his followers, will not find it hard to recognize Pistol in the "ensign" who carries Sir John Falstaff's pennon, nor Bardolph, on the right, by his facial peculiarities, nor perhaps Nym. Sir John himself is mounted, and is seen beyond the martial array, and we may thank the artist for having perceived that the scene was not merely comical, and that Falstaff was not merely a buffoon. It is evident enough to one who reads the play aright and to one who will look at the picture with appreciative eyes, that Falstaff is not the worst of captains of infantry, nor the most inefficient beater-up of recruits. It is evident that this strange compound of qualities is not, in the last analysis, a mere coward, but a worthy gentleman who has "gone wrong"—who has allowed sloth and self-seeking to overmaster his better parts.

[1] I, Henry IV, Act IV, Scene 2.

Whether the artist meant to hint at something of this sort when he gave him, as his badge, as the one emblem embroidered upon his banner and upon his bridle-rein, the cockle-shell which implies pilgrimage to the Holy Land, it would not be easy to ascertain.

This, indeed, is a glorified form of book illustration. It is in this way that the greater works of our literature should be set forth in pictured comment. It is notorious that there are few good illustrations of Shakespeare's works, or at least that one looks in vain for them, and finds one here and one there; and a photogravure of this picture by Stacy Marks would be well to include in any new illustrated edition of the historical plays.

And now to take a step further into the domain of sentiment, while still clinging to the humorous side. Consider Gérôme's picture of the two Hăr̆ŭspĭcēs (Plate LXI).[1]

[1] Deux Augures: Oil on canvas, exhibited in 1861. By Jean Léon Gérôme (1824–1905); born and lived in France. Member of the Institute (Académie des Beaux-Arts), Professor of Painting at the École des Beaux-Arts from 1863; Commander of the Legion of Honour.

It is well to translate in this way for the sake of archæological verity. They are not Augurs, the two gentlemen in their heavily folded togas; they are soothsayers of the old Etruscan tradition. And moreover it is the Hăruspĕx of which the often-quoted Latin passage treats—the only passage in which the old joke is preserved for us:[1] how Cato said that he wondered why a soothsayer didn't laugh when he saw a soothsayer. The two gentlemen are the priests of a mysterious religion, who meet and catch one another's eye for a moment in front of the cage of the sacred chickens, and one of them holds out his divining staff, his *lituus*, with an unspoken comment upon the folly of those worshippers outside. It is good archæology, we may observe; with possible exception of the cap on the head of him with the staff, and the well-grown look of the *pulli*. Gérôme was a most careful and conscientious student of the verities, historical and

[1] Cato mirari se aiebat, quod non rideret haruspex, haruspicem cum vidisset. Cicero De Divinatione ad M. Brutum.

Plate LXI.—DEUX AUGURES; J. L. GÉRÔME.

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Plate LXII.—DER TOD ALS FREUND; ALFRED RETHEL.

geographical, and was as careful to verify his costumes and surroundings, when they were of Roman antiquity, as in the case of those eastern and southern peoples which he had himself studied on the spot. On the other hand Gérôme is not an artist whose work is fascinating to those who care for painting. There was, years ago, the satirical comment of some young students of another school, that they could not endure the handling, the manipulation, the surface of the painting of Gérôme "because it resembled the bellies of frogs." When that statement came out in a Paris periodical it appealed to me strongly, because only a few weeks previous I had detected a Gérôme and had it dragged out from behind a pile of canvases when only a one-inch strip was visible down the height of the picture. One would not have recognized the work of a favourite master so quickly. The work of a favourite master, the work of a man whose every brush-stroke is a delight to you, is too complex. One would not see its ear-marks quite so quickly; but a Gérôme

—that irritating kid-glovelike smoothness of the thing—shouts at the student of oil paintings and calls his attention as any such discord would be sure to fix it.

Plate LXII[1] is taken from a woodcut, the drawing of which was made by Alfred Rethel, and which we can trust to have been faithfully engraved from the drawing because of the earnest effort which Rethel was making, at the time, to have his execution bring back the beauty of old-fashioned German wood engraving, the wood engraving of Albert Dürer and his congeners. The print is not named in the catalogues generally; it seems to be confused in the minds of the catalogue-makers with the set or series known as the new Dance of Death (Ein Todtentanz aus dem Jahr 1848); but indeed there are two plates, Death as the Destroyer (Der Tod als Erwürger), and the one before us, Death as the Friend. The ghastly details of the

[1] Der Tod als Freund: Engraving on wood, drawn about 1850; original, ten and seven-eighths by eleven and seven-eighths inches. By Alfred Rethel (1816–1869); lived at Aix-la-Chapelle and Dresden.

picture first named we will not give space to here; but the significance of the one before us is plain enough. There has come up to the belfry where the old bell-ringer was, another figure in monk's gown, with pilgrim's hat adorned with the cockle-shell, with staff; and although the scrip is not visible, the leaves of palm (though badly drawn, as must be confessed) are in plain sight. This *défroque* the visitor has laid upon a chair. His presence, the presence of Death, has sufficed to quiet the old sexton, either in the tranquillity of death or that of patient expectancy—we are left to wonder as to this. As the sun is setting, already half down below the horizon, and as the moment has come to strike the bell above, it is Death the Friend who takes that task upon himself.

Now in this case the absence of colour enables the draughtsman to simplify also his system of light and shade, following closely his masters, the fifteenth century draughtsmen for wood engraving. And it might be a good rule to establish, that when the artist

has some such passionate or pitiful appeal to make to us, he should be forbidden the use of colour and left to the simplicities of drawing in black and white. For wherein would this picture appeal more forcibly to the sentiment with which it has to do, if it were a painting six feet square and costing a large sum, instead of a woodcut sold at a dollar or two? The object of painting is to give us the glory of the world in light and shade, or in colour associated with so much form as will give to light and shade and to colour their more glorious development. But patriotic or military aspirations and sympathy, in all their forms from pity to rejoicing, are as well rendered by the cheap and freely multiplied picture.

It is necessary to speak of the pre-Raphaelite movement and the efforts of the sincere painters and designers, Ford Madox Brown, Millais, Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Arthur Hughes, and Collinson, to give sincerity and significance to the "literary subject" of drawings. The famous edition of Tennyson of 1859 is the most ac-

cessible museum of their designs; for, scarce as the original may be, it has been reissued with notes and comments. In that book, John Everett Millais illustrated Mariana, the Miller's Daughter, St. Agnes' Eve; Holman Hunt illustrated about as many of the short poems, and no one who has ever seen these woodcuts will forget the young Moslem in his sailboat on the Tigris, or the Lady of Shallott when the prophecy was fulfilled; Rossetti illustrated The Palace of Art with those two most stimulating pictures "The Clear-wall'd City on the Sea" and the "Weeping Queens" watching Arthur. In this way and in the pages of *Once a Week* the pre-Raphaelite feeling for sincerity and for pathos based upon human life took form. They desired—that little body of enthusiasts of which Holman Hunt was the chief spirit—to begin the progress of art once more at a point assumed to be that where art began to go astray. They held that the artists before a certain epoch, which we may take as the year 1500, were sincere, unaffected, simple, each man work-

ing at his art in the true traditional spirit, each man practicing as he had been taught by his master. They held also that at the beginning of the sixteenth century there was a great falling off in sincerity and directness of aim, which decay or decline was closely connected with an immense advance in technical power. They hardly inquired about the wonderful achievements of the Venetians a few years later. They were not thinking of painting as a manual art of great splendour even when having no particular moral or spiritual message to deliver; they were first of all worshippers of nature in a fashion natural to those who had around them no important works of art, such as those which showed on every church wall in Italy. Think what the life of the Englishman, even of the artistic Englishman, was in 1850! It was as remote from any immediate influence of great art as is to-day the life in a small New England town, or one of the growing towns of the western United States. It hardly occurs to the inhabitant of such a town that he

might have important works of art close by him, meeting him at every turn, and the condition of things in England was about equivalent to that, in London itself. Therefore the reformers did not bethink them of the splendour and the daily charm possible to a community which practices the art of painting as a matter of course, without asking too curiously whether it has much to say or not; they were thinking about that very question, What have we to say? and they found that Raphael had almost nothing to say, to them. The effort, which was certainly not a mighty effort to him, to produce a lovely countenance as of a sweet and not very intelligent country girl, and to affix this countenance to a gracefully drawn and prettily draped body, was not, in the opinion of the pre-Raphaelites, the ultimate triumph of the art of painting. Even if they admired the great Raphaels, they could not receive them as typical works of art to imitate or even to study.

They did not see, however, that it was quite unnecessary to go back of Raphael to

the poorly instructed men of the Florentine and Umbrian schools before his time. Had they been devoted to the art of painting in a single-minded way they would have been guilty of a serious oversight in not considering the post-Raphaelite painters of Venice and of the North. In reality, their attempt was to express the unexpressible thoughts of poetical, philosophical and religiously inclined spirits; and they had at heart a new way of representing nature, new theories of what it was best to represent; and all this directed to a spiritual end—that was their aim, and the Venetians would not have helped them to reach it.

The extreme limit of the loftiest and most pathetic significance is to be found, of course, in subjects connected with the religion which is dear to artists and to lookers-on alike, and the attempts of the nineteenth century painters to give to the Christian history and the Christian legend a more evident and also a more thrilling reality are worthy of our highest respect and closest

attention. We can only deal with one of them in this place, which will also be our single example of the work of the pre-Raphaelites. The picture by Millais called most generally Christ in the Carpenter's Shop is given in Plate LXIII,[1] and its peculiarity is in the way in which devotional feeling is invited and expressed, at once, by the minute details which have so much significance—such constant allusion to the Gospel narrative, the passage that is taken as the verification of the words in Zechariah: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thy hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."[2] And of course the assumption is that there was a true fulfillment of this passage taken as a prophecy. But apart from that, it will be seen that the child Jesus has wounded his hand in the centre of the palm, that

[1] Christ in the House of His Parents: Oil on canvas, completed 1849. The photograph after a line engraving by L. L. Gruner of Dresden. Painting by John Everett Millais, (1829–1896) who was made a baronet in 1885.

[2] Zechariah 13: 6. (King James' Version.)

Joseph the carpenter is looking at the wound with anxiety, that Mary is kneeling beside him in distress, that blood from the hand has dropped upon the instep, thus indicating the stigmata, and that the young boy who is bringing the needed basin of water is he who was to preach baptism, John the Precursor. There are other emblems less closely connected with the incident. The dove upon the ladder; the grass of the field which has been thrust into the oven; the sheep eagerly looking towards the persons in the shop and crowding each other in their eagerness while they are restrained and protected by a wattled fence evidently signifying the Church; all these at least are highly significant and very deliberately brought into the composition. Whether the fact that the carpenter and his assistant are working upon a door has any significance, whether S. Anne and the movement of her right hand towards the pair of pincers with which she seems to mean to draw out that nail which has done the mischief, have any similar sig-

Plate LXIII.—CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF HIS PARENTS; J. E. MILLAIS AND L. L. GRUNER.

Plate LXIV.—THE MANITOU LUNETTE; E. H. BLASHFIELD.

UNIV. OF MICH.

nificance, it may interest the reader to inquire.[1]

Any painter will tell you that interesting incident and outside thought interfere terribly with painting,—both in practice, and in after study; that when he is dealing with a work of art in which sentiment plays a great part, he soon forgets the art in the sentiment, whatever it may be, and attends to that alone. This was said recently by a living artist and critical writer, a man of great and deserved reputation, as he studied a bas-relief of some historical meaning—a seventeenth century piece of some interest; and the immediate conclusion was that one was compelled to forget the work of art in order to follow up the history and judge of its correctness. So, in taking up again some pictures which were dealt with in a previous chapter, Plate LI, De Neuville's interesting episode of military history, drives even the practiced observer of fine art com-

[1] All these details and the general disposition of the picture are perfectly shown in the engraving. This is the only instance in which I have reproduced a work of art which is not wholly original; but a photograph of the picture was not accessible.

positions to think rather of the possibilities of the situation, the probable meaning of the message from the enemy, the possible results of it. This might be less true of an inspection of the work itself, because the brush-work in its interesting character and the charm of light and shade and colour on the near figures and in the distant landscape, might save the situation for the painting, as painting. On the other hand, the fact of the uniforms and accoutrements showing in their true local colours, as they were, might add to the non-artistic interest of the spectator; and it is quite easy to imagine an artist of high-wrought enthusiasm for his own art having also that interest which the student and discoverer learns to feel in the exactness of the military details. There are persons to whom the study of weapons and uniforms, looked at historically, is of extreme interest; they collect information on those facts as others do information about geographical discoveries, or the like. It would be so in the painting by Detaille (Plate LII) in which the uni-

forms and other appurtenances of the regiment, when taken together, might fix the date of the painting very accurately. There are so many varieties of dress and accoutrements here, that it is a valuable document for the student of such things. There can be no doubt that many an art student has looked at that picture, regarding less the very lovely landscape effect of which there is mention above, than this artistically unimportant matter as to when the infantry of the line wore such uniforms as those.

So in the picture by Troyon (Plate LV) we can quite easily imagine an observer, even if an artist, as much interested in the breeds of the cattle and sheep as in the landscape. Although donkeys are not much known in the United States, no one can have lived much in Italy or in the Spanish parts of America without feeling an interest in them which is quite especial; so that the student of this picture may be greatly attracted by the question, what breed of donkeys is represented by the one beast before him.

If the Turner picture (Plate LIII) were

a little less a matter of mist and smoke, the student might be carried away by a desire to study the locomotives of 1840; and although this is not very likely to happen to an artist or a student of art, it is still imaginable.

In the paintings treated in the next chapter, the large mural pictures, the historical interest comes in very strongly, and must needs sway the opinion of every one regarding the pictures. Thus in Mr. C. Y. Turner's Burning of the Peggy Stewart (Frontispiece), a passage in American colonial history is treated which is very little known to the history books generally, and which will therefore excite all the more curiosity—a curiosity only to be gratified by a visit to Baltimore where the picture is, and a study of the documents prepared to explain it. The artist, in this important instance, has taken every precaution to avoid an unduly historical tone; he has painted a decorative composition, if there ever was one. And yet to the student of the picture, and especially one who sees the

original series with the background of yellow flame against which the figures in the middle of the composition are relieved, the masts and sails, the house and the costumes, the question as to this interesting event, and as to whether it should have been so ignored while the Boston Tea Party has been made so important in our records, will absorb all other thoughts.

The weakness of modern painting is precisely here. It has proved to be, not an added virtue, this introduction of patriotic and domestic sentiment into art, but a weakness, in that it does so much to prevent art from working its proper work and giving to the spectator that enjoyment which art alone can give. It is not quite as bad as if we exacted from the composer that his music should be descriptive of the farm-yard cries or of the thunder-storm; that would be an even worse influence to exert over a pure fine art; but the influence of modern sentimentality over painting, over book illustration, over woodcuts and etchings, over graphic art in all its shapes, is as-

surely bad enough, and to be discounted by all students of drawing and of painting in the nineteenth century. It is largely for this reason that landscape has become so decidedly our chief modern development of fine art, for the sentiment other than artistic which is excited in the mind by the study of a landscape picture is felt to be in the mind itself—in its own memories, its own associations. The picture contains no thoughts but those truly artistic thoughts which are fully expressed in harmonies of light-and-shade and colour.

# CHAPTER X

## RECENT ART: MONUMENTAL EFFECT

MURAL painting has grown to be of singular importance during the years since 1875. There had been indeed, in France, a never ceasing continuity in this as in the other arts accessory to architecture; and to a less degree in other lands of the continent; and in England, from 1840, on, there were frequently renewed efforts to decorate new public buildings, such as the Houses of Parliament—efforts accompanied by many experiments in old and in untried vehicles and ways of working. But since the coming in of the third quarter of the nineteenth century the increase in the number and the importance of mural paintings has been very great, and has been noticeable in almost every year. The enormous outlay which the wealth of modern society makes feasible, and which the spending habits of modern society make inevitable, carries

with it the adornment of interiors with painting as of exteriors with statuary. And right here, in this comparison between the two great arts, lies one of the peculiarities of the recent advance in mural decoration in colour. For even as the sculpture on the outside of a great public building is no longer architectural sculpture, but is commonly free statuary, merely attached to the building, merely set up with the walls of the building for its background, so the painting which is applied to the interiors of the new buildings consists of pictures, with almost no decorative appliances in the way of painted borders, frames, scroll-work and pattern-designing of any importance, and with but little thought for general chromatic effect. The habit of mind of the nineteenth century is seen in this: everything for pictures and for representative sculpture; nothing by way of decorative art in any true sense—that is with the decoration coming first and counting for most.

It has been suggested in previous chapters that the Venetian painting of the sixteenth

century, supremely magnificent as it was, and stately as were its figure drawing and its system of coloured light and shade, was yet less accurately adapted to the decoration of interiors than the fresco work of the Florentines, the Umbrians and the Romans. A great Paul Veronese could be moved from one place to another—set up first in this room and then in that—with less injury to its qualities as a work of art than could a fresco of the fifteenth century receive even a slight refurnishing, rearranging, redecorating of the room which it adorned. There is, of course, a good and a bad side to this highly decorative character of the Florentine, the Siennese, the Lombard, the Roman work. It is at once a confession of weakness and a claim of strength for the early work of central Italy. The frescoes shown in Plate III, Plate VI, and Plate XII, have that singular virtue that they belong to their place, exclusively. They have also that inherent feebleness that they could be easily disturbed in their effect upon the spectator by adverse sur-

roundings; while a great Venetian picture cannot be imagined as seriously so affected by its neighbourhood. A Tintoretto will insist upon the energetic vigour of its figure subjects, a Titian will insist upon the grandiose quality of its individual personages, in any hall or gallery whatsoever.

Recent art, inheriting both these tendencies, works itself out in many different ways, and it is the purpose of this chapter to show what those recent tendencies really are. Thus, the Sargent paintings in the Boston Public Library, of which two separate panels are shown in Plate XLV, are strictly mural paintings in their conception; and in no respect do they lack anything of dignity or of impressive sublimity, while their technical merit as paintings is, of course, very great. But at the other end of Sargent Hall, which is described in Chapter VII, is another mural painting by the same artist, but so different in its character, as a decorative design, that no greater contrast could possibly be offered to the reader than the two pictures, shown side by side.

I have published in a recent volume that splendid painting which is at the southern end of Sargent Hall.[1] The Frieze of the Prophets, below the lunette at the north end, is drawn with great freedom of gesture, with much expression of individual feeling in the persons represented, with a daring and almost excessive modelling which seems to call for the brilliant brush-work which invests it; but the painting which, at the south end, fills the lunette and the wall below it is as severe in its lines as a Byzantine mosaic, and as restrained in its technique as the earliest Roman frescoes of Raphael. The design is formal and severe, almost beyond belief in the case of a wholly recent composition; and the delight which it is capable of giving to a lover of paintings who has also strong and loving memories of early work in Italy, is unbounded. It is quite within the limits of probability that many persons will be in doubt which of the two ends

[1] See "The Interdependence of the Arts of Design" (Scammon Lectures for 1904), A. C. McClurg & Co., 1905.

of Sargent Hall is the more impressive. To some, in spite of the splendid freedom of the Frieze of the Prophets, the south end carries it over all opposition, and seems to reach an equal rank with the finest mural painting of modern times.

This form,—the semicircular piece of flat wall which we call a lunette, and the resulting semicircular painting prepared to fill it—is a common one in our modern buildings, because the classical method of vaulting, imitated from Roman Thermæ and palace halls, is followed by France, Germany and Italy in masonry, and is imitated in America in lath and plaster in a disgraceful way, although there is here and there a piece of solid vaulting. Sargent Hall has been described above as a continuous tunnel-like vaulted room, the rounded roof of which cuts out a lunette on each end wall. The new Minnesota State Capitol has its Senate Chamber and also its Supreme Court Room built according to that more elaborate system of vaulting in which a low, round cupola is carried by means of pendentives,

on the shorter sides of an octagon (or square *with its corners cut off*) while, from the larger sides, short tunnel vaults go off to give the hall the space required. In the Senate Chamber these tunnel vaults are about thirty feet in diameter; and two of the four arms of the cross are filled by public galleries, so that the lunettes there have no pictures; while the other two arms of the cross are cut down to nothing, so that the lunettes painted by Mr. Blashfield are on the very walls of the hall, and strongly lighted from the dome. The lunettes are thirty feet wide, but unfortunately the two pictures are made very low in proportion. Instead of occupying a little *more* than the half circle, with their height, more than half their width (which is generally a fortunate disposition), the painting is in each case confined to a segment of the circle, and measures in the proportion of fourteen feet high to thirty feet wide or thereabouts. The base line is twenty-five feet above the floor. Of course the shape is quite arbitrary, and the long and narrow picture may

be thought to lend itself to the peculiar composition which is now much in fashion. For, consider Mr. Blashfield's lunette (Plate LXIV),[1] the strongly marked arrangement of the picture, in three groups with open spaces between, is characteristic of this artist's numerous large wall paintings; and no painter has had a wider influence over his fellows. It may be said that this is a natural disposition, in the case of a picture much longer than high, and of great size, because the spectator naturally walks from point to point along its front in the attempt to make out its full significance. Of course the artist thinks of a single point of view and works to it, but again, and equally of course, he adopts secondary points of view as well, if the spectator may be expected to

[1] The Discoverers and Civilizers at the Head Waters of the Continent: Painting in oil on canvas (applied to the wall by *marouflage*) in the Minnesota State Capitol. By Edwin Howland Blashfield (b. 1848). [As the picture on the opposite side is closely connected in subject with this one, its title may be given: The Triumph of Minnesota. The personified State rides on wheat-sheaves and is drawn by white oxen. The right-hand group is made up of figures of the Civil War: that on the left is composed of the farmers, lumbermen and mechanics of the new century.]

walk twenty feet along the floor of the room in order to reach the axis of the right hand or the left hand group. One grows tired of the constant recurrence of the triple disposition, that crowded group to the left, that other one to the right, a principal central group, and vacant spaces between. And yet the constant employment of it by mural painters, when they undertake a metaphorical subject, is evidence enough of its quasi-necessity—at least of its immediate fitness for the purpose in hand.

This points to one of the reasons why an historical subject is really an advantage to a mural painter. It is known to all students of architectural composition that men will instinctively lay out things in a symmetrical way, unless there are strong and immediate reasons to the contrary. Unless you are driven by an immediate necessity, you will carry a straight path from your garden gate to your house door, you will lay out your village with a straight street and lanes going off at right angles, you will lay out your city as New York is laid out,

on a plan like a gridiron. On the other hand, the moment the strong inducement appears and a river, or a hill, breaks into your village bounds; or when one is told, as in laying out Washington, that he must radiate his streets from two great centres in order to show off two great buildings, the engineer does so, readily enough, and produces the more diversified plan with its many pleasant results. So in painting. If the designer has a story to tell he will think primarily of his incident, and in Plate XII, Plate XXVI, Plate LXV and Plate LXVII, the important personage in the composition is not placed in the middle of the picture: and this is nearly always an advantage. It is generally felt to be so, in smaller pictures; and it has to be a very formal occasion indeed, an accepted convention, like an altar-piece, which will induce the artist to follow an exactly symmetrical design.

It is as instinctive to insist upon the central group, the wings, and the minor details which connect them, in a painting like that shown in Plate LXIV, as it is in the plan

of the Palace of the Luxembourg, the New York City Hall, or any one of the numerous neo-classic buildings which the nineteenth century has left us. But on that very account it is fortunate when the strong necessity of telling a story in a reasonable way shall force the artist into a less formal composition. Thus in the present instance, St. Paul, being near to the head of the Great Lakes and to the Source of the Mississippi, may be identified with the watershed, the "divide" for all the great streams going off East and South; and so the god of the red race is shown with his people, as a ruler of the inland waters. Then the group of discoverers on the right, with their light boat meant to be carried over portages, and the settlers on the left, with their dog-team and sledge, typify the opening to white men of the heart of the continent—which was achieved by means of those very implements. And it is almost inevitable that so general, so abstract, a subject should be treated in this formal way.

The separate figures in Mr. Blashfield's lunette leave nothing to be desired in the way of dignified presence, and the costume is in every way fortunate. The more stately dress of the military leader on the right, and that of the priest on the left, help well the rough garb of the woodsmen and the explorers. The nearly nude figures in the central group seem to be the most important part of the design in that they assert so plainly the enormous artistical importance of the nude when treated with the necessary conventionality of ideal forms. As has been said in other chapters, a well-painted head has nothing to fear from the neighbourhood of the most splendidly wrought-up costumes, embroidery and polished steel. The head is capable of so much more artistic beauty, that the cuirass and the sword-hilt are as nothing by comparison. And so in the present instance, the nude figures at once draw the eye with a sense of pleasant relief from the cloth, the leather, and the broad-brimmed hats. And that has been a magnificent conception, that

densely crowded group of evergreen trees, relieved against whose trunks, as against the *dosseret* of a great throne, sits the Indian deity.

The lunettes of the Supreme Court Room in the Minnesota Capitol are somewhat smaller, but here all four lunettes will be occupied by paintings, and Mr. La Farge's pictures which nearly fill them are twenty-seven feet long and thirteen feet high. Plate LXV[1] gives one of those four lunettes in its preliminary stage; the drawing in black and white having been very thoroughly completed in all its parts, but no colour as yet put upon the canvas. Several colour studies have been exhibited alongside of it, showing sufficiently what

[1] The Recording of Precedents—Confucius and his Disciples: Preliminary drawing in black and white on the actual canvas (not a cartoon), in the Minnesota State Capitol. By John La Farge, b. 1835. [As the four lunettes of the Supreme Court Room form a series and are connected with the growth of human law, it seems necessary to mention their subjects. I. The Giving of the Moral Law (Moses on Mt. Sinai, with Aaron and Joshua). II. The Relation of the Individual to the State (Socrates and his friends in discussion). III. The Recording of Precedents (as above). IV. The Adjustment of Conflicting Interests (Count Raymond of Toulouse swearing to observe the liberties of the State).]

the scheme is to be. One of those colour-studies was a drawing made by the artist himself in Japan about the year 1896. It was a careful drawing of a Japanese garden —one of those highly artificial and wonderfully effective bits of minute landscape gardening. Natural rocks are bared of moss here,—are planted with delicate vegetation there,—larger but still small trees are planted on the edge of the little cliff, with a truly Japanese sense of all the requirements, water to a carefully determined amount is allowed to run over the rocks in a little cascade, half transparent, half white with foam. The still lakelet at the foot of the fall is of determined size and of the desired colour; the whole is as carefully set forth upon the background of the sky as any ideal composition upon canvas. It was this drawing which Mr. La Farge enlarged, with alterations, to serve as the background of his Chinese scene of a time in the almost inconceivable, far away, great past—580–550 years B. C. The slowly changing East allows us to take its cos-

Plate LXV.—THE RECORDING OF PRECEDENTS; JOHN LA FARGE.

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*From a Copley Print, Copyright 1898 by Curtis & Cameron, Publishers, Boston.*

Plate LXVI.—THE FLIGHT OF NIGHT; W. M. HUNT.

tumes of to-day with but slight modifications as types of the dress of remote antiquity; and in like manner the nineteenth century garden of the Island Empire may be carried over by an effort of the mind to serve as the view in the garden of the great moral philosopher of China.

This is the kind of history which the painter may consider as wholly his own. No one would care to describe in words the probable appearance of the garden, the dress, the mats, the table, the scroll, and the scholars of Confucius' own immediate surroundings; but history is helped very much by the fact that the artist, the recorder of visible facts, is willing to study the subject, certainties and probabilities alike, and to build up an approximate record. When the proportions can be as singularly felicitous as here, the widely-scattered group so well posed and kept together, a very high order of monumental dignity is given to work which in other respects is scholarly and serviceable. The very rich and splendid colour with which

Mr. La Farge invests his painting is not expressible in photography nor easy to describe.

This is a good point at which to stop for a moment and explain to the reader that, in writing about contemporary work, it is quite impracticable to express as plainly one's own likes and preferences, or the gathered opinions of others, as in dealing with ancient work. It is not merely—not even principally—because harm may be done or good improperly done to artists who are still at work, and still open to more or less injury or assistance. It is chiefly because the time has not come to pass upon their work. It does not take, indeed, always a very long time to make a picture seem ancient to us; familiarity and changing aspirations may have much to do with that. The wall paintings on the outside of the old picture gallery at Munich, those in the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, those in the Capitol at Washington, the broad frieze in Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, are not very old, in years; but they can

all be judged because they belong to an ancient time, because their artistic period has already expired and seems as remote as the Renaissance. But the pictures by which this chapter is illustrated are recent in character; whether their authors are living or not the art is of our own immediate system of thought, and might have been brought into being during this summer of 1905. Therefore it is that criticism of them, even if only suggestive, must be given in a guarded fashion. No one can speak his mind with freedom, because the chances are that his opinion will be modified greatly as new works strike his eye, as new considerations arise to sway his mind.

The works of William Hunt in the Albany Capitol are an instance of this, for although Hunt has been dead for many years and his mural paintings have been destroyed, the work is as recent, as living, as if it were still damp upon the walls. Plate LXVI[1] gives one of two paintings

[1] The Flight of Night: Mural painting in the State Capitol at Albany, New York. Painted upon the plaster by a process in-

which have wholly disappeared; two large compositions which had direct reference to the discovery and settling of America. The other work was called The Discoverer, and seemed to symbolize the voyage of Columbus; Faith, Hope, Knowledge and Fortune waiting on the solitary navigator. In the picture, Plate LXVI, the three horses were of three colours, white and black, and, as I remember it, a dark bay: and these made a striking contrast with the gray masses of cloud. The pictures were more absolutely symbolical, even, than other monumental paintings shown in this chapter: but their remoteness of significance did not mar their decorative effect, which was very great, and overcame the extremely awkward setting.

In what way fully developed historical painting may be used on walls, and its value as a mural decoration, are well shown by the

vented, or modified, by the artist, William Morris Hunt (1824–1879). Imperfect construction caused uneven settlement of the building. The walls on which were the paintings had to be concealed by new mason work, made necessary to support the sinking roof, and the pictures are partly destroyed, partly concealed —not a foot of them left visible.

picture, Plate LXVII.[1] Nothing is really known of the appearance of the interior of the Temple of Jupitor Stator, or of any other hall in which the senate might have met on that eighth of November, B. C. 63. It is known, however, or at least it is recorded, that some kind of sacrifice, or ceremony by way of worship, always preceded business, a fact which explains the tripod and cloud of incense; and that the members present avoided sitting near Catiline, for no man had a fixed or permanent place except the consuls and the employees. The form and the ways of wearing the toga have been much studied, as also forms of foot-gear. The artist had, then, to think out a probable scheme : to design seats, using fine Greek models for the purpose, to line the walls of his imagined senate-house with veined marble, and, finally, to lay out the rows of seats in a possible way, which should also prove effective in his painted composition,

[1] Cicero Attacking Catiline in the Senate of Rome: Picture about forty-four feet long, on the walls of the Palazzo Madama in Rome, now occupied by the Senate of the kingdom of Italy. By Cesare Maccari (b. 1840).

where the curves were to be shown in rather flat perspective, as if looked at by a person in the hall itself—on an upper bench at one end of the hemicycle. All this preparation was well carried out; and it has resulted well, for the main lines of the design adapt themselves to the space filled by the picture: and, again, the draped figures are grouped with one another, and with the fixed lines of their setting, in a very successful way. The study of character is quite another matter, and any student of expressional art may find employment in working back into the artist's mind and discovering his, the artist's, thought about the consul at the crisis of his fulmination, the lonely senator, Catiline, against whom all Rome (Sallust being witness) was already crying out, and who was now attacked by one of the temporary princes of the State with the apparent purpose of driving him out of Rome—these, and the threescore listeners in their varied postures, and with their varied expressions of interest in the stirring scene.

In this painting of Maccari, it is notice-

Plate LXVII.—CICERO DENOUNCING CATILINE; MACCARI.

Plate LXVIII.—HOMAGE TO WOMAN; WILL H. LOW.

able also how well the painted scene conforms to the actual door-piece and dado; and indeed this fitness for its place is a valuable secondary quality in all mural painting. The painter of a big historical or metaphorical piece has indeed a right to expect the makers of dados and friezes, floor mosaics and door-casings, to conform in colour effect to his picture. This is his right as the chief artist among several—as the man who has in hand the most important part, by much, of the room's adornment. But this does not apply to a doorway in the place where a door must be—to seats along the walls where seats must be, or to high backs for those seats, perhaps forming a continuous dado. Those are the obvious utilities. Signor Maccari had to submit to *them;* while he may be supposed to have had his way as to the colour and the surfaces, the mouldings and the gilding. His picture had to be modified by the unavoidable disposition of plan and fittings, and even of a certain grandiose architectural tradition.

A somewhat different condition exists when it is a ceiling which has to be painted. Mr. Low, in painting the ceiling shown in Plate LXVIII,[1] was free, in a sense, because he had a flat oval space of given size, the enframing of it being fixed, in advance, as panel-work of light wood which should cover the walls.

Pictures painted upon ceilings seem to be works of supererogation. They come into our scope of decorative art only in cases where there is so much art to spare and comparatively so little space to devote to it, that the directors of such matters are forced to utilize the ceilings as well as the walls. Indeed, in one very famous building, in the great Cathedral at Siena, where the style of architecture and also the epoch counted against the painting of considerable pictures on either walls or roof—the very floor was utilized. That unique and astonishing Pavement of Siena was created to which volumes have been devoted, to the artistic

[1] Homage to Woman: Painting in oil on canvas, twenty-six by thirty-four feet: about 1893. By Will H. Low, b. 1853.

design of which endless essays have been given, which is covered with planks for fear that the floor, if put to its natural uses, should lose its extraneous and artistic charm, and which is only shown on certain great occasions and with singular precautions. But, after all, the great objection to putting pictures on the floor is that you cannot get a sight of them without climbing to the roof, or nearly so far; and the great objection to pictures on the ceiling is that to appreciate them you have to lie on your back on the floor. That is actually done, and often done, in certain important cases. It is so that we approach the ceiling pictures in the Ducal Palace, for the marvellous Veronese oval in the roof of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, that by Palma Giovane and the central quadrilateral by Tintoretto (to name no other pictures there or in adjoining halls) require such adaptation of the student's posture to the conditions; and the custodians are accustomed to bring rugs and cushions, and to tell enthusiasts at what hour in

the day they are least likely to be disturbed.

In those Venetian pictures there is some attempt at taking the point of view below and fixing the plane of the picture above; so that the perspective, the arrangement of lines, may seem to the spectator as natural when seen overhead, as a picture on the wall is when seen from a point of sight nearly on its own level horizontally. This perspective treatment is, however, rather deceptive than real. In the magnificent Veronese above mentioned, the Triumph of Venice, and the smaller ones in the adjacent hall, Venice, Queen of the Sea, or Venice with Justice and Pity, some part at least of the picture is treated according to those rules of mathematical perspective with which all sixteenth century artists had become familiar. The student looking upward sees parapets and ladies leaning over them as if they were indeed in existence around a court, or an opening in a roof, through which unroofed space he looks up to the sky and to the divinities floating

there. But a very slight examination serves to show that the artist has realized the strangeness of this pose. His laurel-wreathed Mars, his stately Venice whom angels are about to crown, the personified Virtues and Powers on the clouds about her, are drawn as if seen from below, indeed, but not as if seen when looking directly upward—the spectator is supposed to be a long way off to the west. If he will go off thirty feet in that direction he will seem to have about the correct point of view to suit the lines of the painted architecture. This corresponds, also, with the famous row of Venetian beauties leaning over the parapet below. But the student will not stay far away from the axis of the picture, for the interesting point is this—very many of the figures are drawn as if seen sidewise, without any pretense of being looked at from below—and the vast, the incredible artistic power of the composer is shown in uniting these seemingly incongruous things. In the presenting of trophies to Venice, by Tintoretto, the huge

central square, the case is nearly the same, and the conditions have been made in the same fashion. It is not really a group of figures seen from the floor below—there is no reason that it should be such a scene. The painters of those pictures would have answered the carping questioner that they had found it unnecessary to be so exact. The appearance of the Lady Venice, surrounded by her admiring and worshipping circle and blessed and strengthened by heaven, was familiar to the Venetians; they looked with joy upon it when painted upon the roof or on the walls. To have been rigidly consistent with your upward-looking perspective view would have been to spoil the Triumph and the Worship. What would happen—what would be the result—if a powerful draughtsman were set to work to-morrow with a cartoon already pasted upon a flat ceiling, and with instructions to draw thereupon a group of personages seen as they would be seen if they were really above that ceiling, assumed to be wholly transparent,—is a puzzle, and

will remain so. No millionaire in our time is going to commission a powerful draughtsman of the figure to try the experiment; no great mural painter is going to tempt his employer to order such a ceiling as that.

Now as to the way in which Mr. Low has proceeded in his ceiling of the ladies' reception-room of the Waldorf Hotel, painted when the hotel was first built, in 1893. It owes its position on the ceiling to the fact that here was a room almost predestined to be lined with wood. There were a number of doors which opened, and of necessity would open, in the walls of this room, and it was found best to give it its oval form and its lining of delicate white woodwork in order to avoid the ugly spotted effect of so many doors in a room differently treated. Only the ceiling was left, and the ceiling at least has this to recommend it, that it is free, and may be smooth and unbroken—at least in our time of electric bulbs placed where you want them, replacing the old *lustre* which, of necessity hung heavily in

the middle of the room. It was decided, at all events, that this ceiling should be rich, and Mr. Low has painted there a peep into a Greco-Roman heaven, with the Queen of Love and Beauty acclaimed by the nymphs of her train; and by three splendid harpists (why has "lyrist" lost its true meaning?) who sit on clouds at the right. The little cupids with the scroll are the only figures which are drawn as if seen from below; and yet the whole composition has a marvellous look of open sky and immeasurable depths of space.

When mural painting has to do with the adornment of a room not otherwise very elaborate, the conditions are a little difficult to meet. The painter is almost compelled to keep down the glow of his colour, in one of our cold, pseudo-classic halls. Browns and grays are far more adapted to the walls which are not to be otherwise adorned with much splendour; and they harmonize better with the dull-brown furniture of a court-room, a legislative assembly-room, or the like. So, when Mr. Edward Simmons was

employed upon the Criminal Court Building in New York, by the old Municipal Art Society, since replaced by a society of the same name but having different objects, he painted at one end of the great room a very stately personified Justice, and on each side of that upright picture an oblong panel with three figures. These side panels are given in Plates LXIX and LXX.[1] There is, indeed, a fourth figure in one of the pictures, for the Three Fates seated on their stone bench side by side, fully draped, are accompanied by a *putto*, a child, who plays with the yarn as it comes from the spindle in the right hand of the youngest figure, and seems to help the twisting it into thread as it passes on from her to the central figure and so on to her with the shears. Is this little creature intended to suggest the beginning of life, when the thread first takes shape? To mark the conclusion of life there is a skull at the feet of the Fate

[1] The Fates; and Liberty, Equality and Fraternity: Oil paintings on canvas attached to the wall, in the Criminal Courts Building, New York City. By Edward Simmons (b. 1852).

with the shears, and in fact it would not be well to pry further into the philosophical views of the painter, for, indeed, it is not philosophy which he was expected to furnish; but what he gave, a very noble, a very decorative, a perfectly well-adapted scheme of grave colour combined with stately form in a wall painting of perfectly good taste, controlled, measured, kept together in a faultless way.

The three figures of the other panel are to stand for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; and Liberty is, of course, he who has broken his own chains and seems to be proclaiming to the world his victory over Tyranny. Equality must be he with a perfect sphere in one hand and a pair of dividers, compasses, in the other. Fraternity is he, then, who has a hand upon the wrist of each one of his brothers, and brings them together. If our purpose were the analysis of metaphorical art, it might be interesting to compare with these the three figures on the obverse of the silver

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Plate LXIX.—THE FATES; EDWARD SIMMONS.

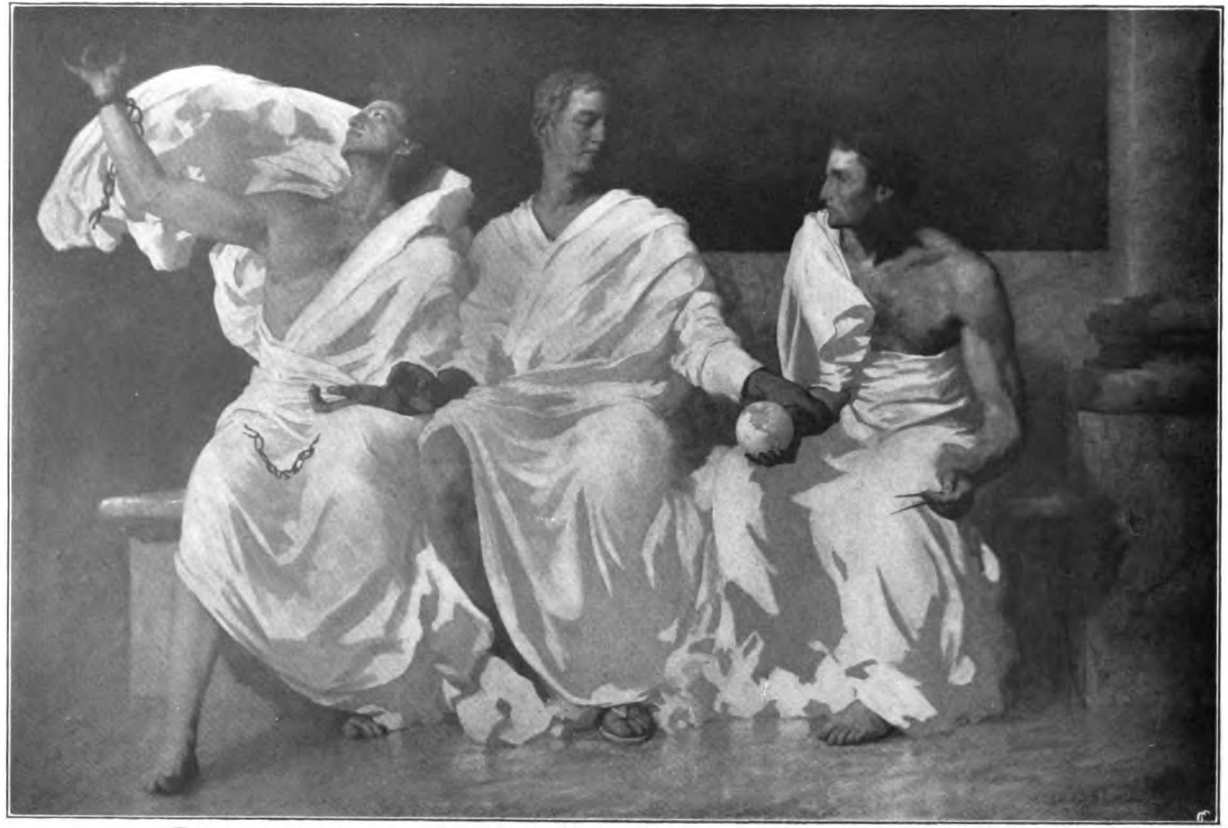

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Plate LXX.—LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY; EDWARD SIMMONS.

five-franc piece of thirty years ago, Dupré's design, with the gigantic male figure, a true Hercules, in the middle. In that group Fraternity and Equality are evidently the two draped and slender female personages, the giant who draws them each to the other is surely Liberty. So difficult and so mysterious are the ways of the symbolist in graphic art!

Mr. C. Y. Turner has given to the eastern cities of America a remarkable series of semi-historical wall pictures, of which the latest completed at this time (May, 1905), is perhaps the most striking and permanently important. Its quality as a painting is, I think, superior to that of his former work, while there can be little question as to its superiority over his own and most other modern mural paintings in its internal significance. The time of the event selected is altogether fortunate, because of its interest to American students of history, and because of the lingering, down to that period, of interesting costume. In 1770, while other taxing acts were repealed, the

tea-tax was retained by Parliament, and the people at Annapolis met the importation of this taxed tea with an open defiance which contrasted with the disguise and concealment of the tea destruction in Boston Harbour. The owner of one tea-laden brig found, when that vessel arrived in Annapolis, that he was under the ban of the patriots in Maryland; and he was compelled, in a way, to set fire to his brig, which was accordingly burned on Windmill Point, Chesapeake Bay, with all her cargo. Mr. Turner's pictures illustrate this event, and they were put up in the new court-house of Baltimore City in January, 1905. There are five panels; and the disposition of the hall is such that it is natural to pass along in front of them, examining one panel at a time. Nevertheless, as the subject is one—as the panorama is continuous and very strongly marked as being one unbroken composition, and as we cannot, in these pages, study all five panels on a sufficient scale, proper size, it is necessary to explain the system followed. The central

panel is given in our frontispiece.[1] The reader is to imagine that picture flanked by two panels of the same size as itself, which panels are nearly filled up by elaborate door-heads of sculptured marble, around which door-heads are the heads and waving hats and handkerchiefs of the enthusiastic spectators, having beyond that the spars and sails of vessels lying in the bay. Outside of these again, to left and to right, are panels One and Five. These are as large as the frontispiece and as unbroken. Panel One, at the left of the spectator, shows three square-rigged vessels with sails set, or unfurled, in the distance of gleaming still water, as if ready to get under way; and in the foreground a group of five men in the dress of citizens, with a sailor and an Oriental of some part of Asia and a very charming young woman with basket and looped-up skirts, as if on her way to market. Panel Five shows a house "of the

[1] The Burning of the Peggy Stewart, at Annapolis, in 1774; five panels, two of which enclose elaborate door-heads, but still continue the general composition. In the new Baltimore Court-House, by Charles Yardley Turner (b. 1850).

period"—a house that still remains; and in the distance the masts of a ship. But the foreground is filled with a family, or what seems a family of well-to-do people, elaborately dressed men and women, and two slaves, together with a little boy held up to see the fire. The central panel, shown in our frontispiece, is full of fiery light. The rich, veined marble in the hall made it natural and necessary to maintain a warm tone of colour, and this lent itself well to a scene of conflagration. The photograph shows but dimly the swirl of flame and fiery smoke which makes the background to these eight figures. They appear a little too unconscious of that absorbing scene to which the eyes of the rest of the people in the great panorama are turned; but the reader has to remember that all those people, the sixty or seventy persons in the composition, looking intently at the fire, as they do, almost demand the contrast of the central group fully absorbed in the causes and consequences of the act. It will not do to take this picture alone; and, that

the reader shall not take it alone—as an independent composition, these paragraphs have been devoted to an account of the whole work.

The works of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes can only be treated by means of elaborate analysis, and can only be represented by photographs taken on a large scale and with great care. He is, of all modern men, the one who has made himself completely at home and strong in the rendering of those spiritual and intellectual compositions which are accepted as the best material for the adornment of buildings. His pictures are often on a colossal scale. That on the wall of the *amphithéâtre* of the Sorbonne appears to measure eighty-five feet in length,[1] and thus exceeds the Paradise by Tintoretto; and even the less important are measured in length by scores of feet—for nearly all the wall paintings of Puvis are long-continued, relatively low friezes. The painting at the head of the staircase in the Boston

[1] See an analysis of this picture in *Scribner's Magazine* (The Field of Art) for October, 1905.

Public Library, the Muses Welcoming the Genius of Enlightenment, is about thirty-five feet long, to judge from the size of the hall in which it is. But in the hall with this are certain smaller painted panels with arched heads, above the rising ramps and platforms of the stairs. Of these, the two standing for Epic and Pastoral Poetry seem to be peculiarly interesting: see Plates LXXI and LXXII.[1] The tranquillity of the composition reflects the tranquillity of mind of which the artist is a worshipper. All his great works breathe that same spirit of repose, as if he were prepared to say to the feverish modern world: Come to Art when you are disposed to peace, and find in Art a quieting influence. "Do not ask me," says Puvis, in effect, "to help you glorify yourselves, your military triumphs, or even your patriotism; those modern virtues of energy and discovery and research and the all-pervading spirit of strife and

[1] Epic Poetry: Pastoral Poetry: Paintings in oil on canvas applied to the wall, about fifteen feet high, in the Public Library of Boston, Mass., about 1895. By Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824–1898).

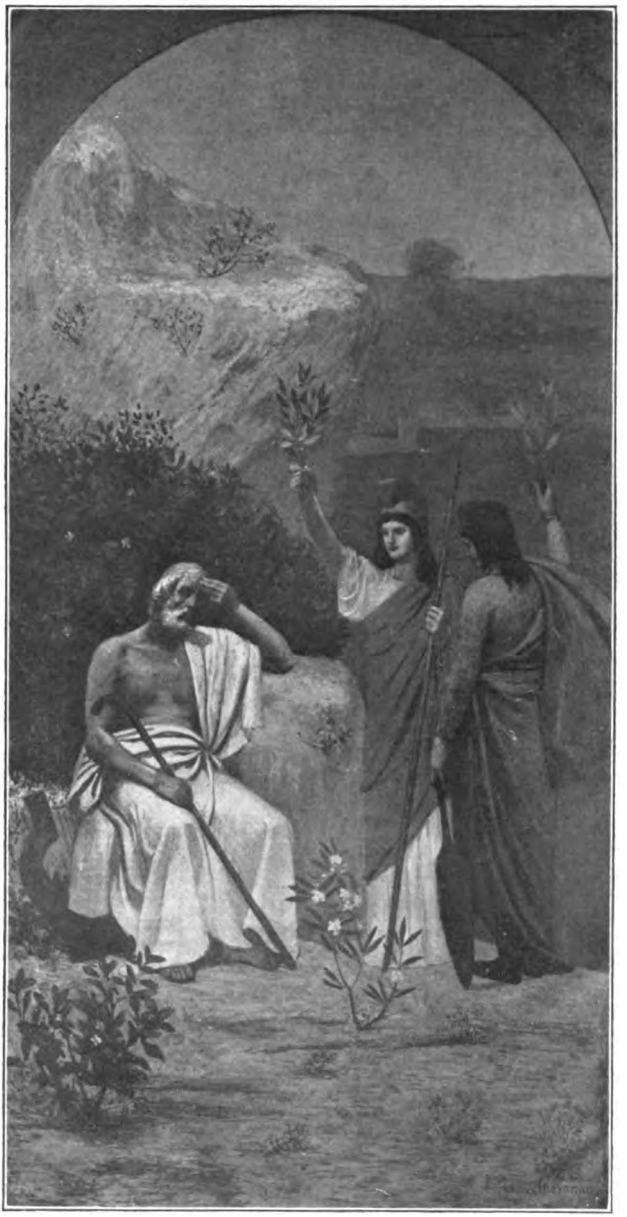

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Plate LXXI.—EPIC POETRY; PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.

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Plate LXXII.—PASTORAL POETRY; PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.

effort are not for me, and I can only show you what I know—the world of tranquillity and of thought."

The very surprising amount of knowledge, the wonderfully conceived, well understood and perfectly managed method of his own, enabled him to give to these figures which, taken separately, seem stiff or at least formal, and to the landscape which by itself seems to be too frankly mediæval, as if of Italy and the fourteenth century, an admirable artistic harmony, and will satisfy the highest artistic aspirations of our times. Even the pale tone of these pictures proves to be the most fitting for the low walls of the Panthéon, the high raised panels of the Boston Library, the vast enclosing *hemicycle* of the Sorbonne; for indeed it accommodates itself to all the stretches, the halls, the corridors, of our modern buildings in a wonderful way, and is probably in this respect more successful than any much more brilliant coloration could be.

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